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THE LESSONS

OF

1885.

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NOTES

ON

THE LESSONS

OF

1885.

PREPARED BY

PROFESSOR EZRA P. GOULD, A.M.

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P. 63



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LESSONS FOR 1885.

Studies in the Acts.

FIRST QUARTER.

LESSON I.—*January 4.*

Paul at Troas. *Acts 20: 2-16.*

LESSON II.—*January 11.*

Paul at Miletus. *Acts 20: 17-27.*

LESSON III.—*January 18.*

Paul's Farewell. *Acts 20: 28-38.*

LESSON IV.—*January 25.*

Paul going to Jerusalem. *Acts 21: 1-14.*

LESSON V.—*February 1.*

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LESSON VI.—*February 8.*

Paul assailed. *Acts 21: 27-40.*

LESSON VII.—*February 15.*

Paul's Defence. *Acts 22: 1-21.*

LESSON VIII.—*February 22.*

Paul before the Council. *Acts 23: 1-11.*

LESSON IX.—*March 1.*

Paul sent to Felix. *Acts 23: 12-24.*

LESSON X.—*March 8.*

Paul before Felix. *Acts 24: 10-27.*

LESSON XI.—*March 15.*

Paul before Agrippa. *Acts 26: 1-18.*

LESSON XII.—*March 22.*

Paul vindicated. *Acts 26: 19-32.*

LESSON XIII.—*March 29.*

Review; or, Missionary, Temperance, or other lesson selected by the school.

Studies in the Acts and the Epistles.

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LESSON VIII.—*May 24.*

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LESSON IX.—*May 31.*

Paul's Charge to Timothy. *2 Tim. 3: 14-17; and 4: 1-8.*

LESSON X.—*June 7.*

God's Message by His Son. *Heb. 1: 1-8; and 2: 1-4.*

LESSON XI.—*June 14.*

The Priesthood of Christ. *Heb. 9: 1-12.*

LESSON XII.—*June 21.*

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LESSON XIII.—*June 28.*

Review; or, Missionary, Temperance, or other lesson selected by the school.

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Review; or, Missionary, Temperance, or other lesson selected by the school.

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LESSON XIII.—*December 27.*

Review; or, Missionary, Temperance, or other lesson selected by the school.

FIRST QUARTER.



LESSON I.

PAUL AT TROAS.—Acts 20:2-16.

A GENERAL VIEW.

We are now drawing to the close of Paul's third missionary journey, and of his missionary activity. In a general way, we may say that his work, during his first missionary journey, extended over the island of Cyprus, and parts of the southern provinces of Asia Minor; that in his second missionary journey, after revisiting the scenes of his previous labors in Asia Minor, and founding churches in Galatia, which makes the centre of that district, he crossed over to Europe, and preached the gospel in Macedonia and Achaia; and that, in his third missionary journey, he labored for the most part in Ephesus, but so that all Asia—meaning the provinces on the west coast of Asia Minor—heard the gospel. His whole work had embraced, therefore, the northern coast of the Mediterranean, as far west as Greece; and the next step, which he fully expected to make, would carry him to Rome. It was a broad plan on which he had worked, and a great work that he had accomplished. But now it is ended, except for the work that he was able to accomplish during his imprisonment at Rome; and in these last words at Troas and Miletus he is really uttering his farewells. The events recorded in these sixteen verses, which make our lesson, cover a year's time, from the spring of A.D. 58 to that of A.D. 59, or possibly one year earlier than that. They may be summed up as follows: He left Ephesus after the uproar over "Diana of the Ephesians," and went across the Ægean Sea to Macedonia. He had made an appointment to meet Titus at Troas, to hear news from the church at Corinth, which was in a sadly disaffected state; and so he went there first: but, as Titus did not come, he crossed over into Macedonia, hoping to intercept him there. Here he spent the summer; and, after the arrival of Titus, he wrote the Second Epistle to the Corinthians. In the autumn or early winter he came to Corinth, to receive from them their collection for the church at Jerusalem, and to settle their difficulties. While here, in contemplation of his early visit to Rome, he wrote his Epistle to the Romans. Here he remained three months. He had been intending to go from here to Syria, on his way to Jerusalem; but a plot of the Jews against him made him change his route, and he went north again through Macedonia to Troas. Thence he embarked for Jerusalem, and the rest of the account gives simply the stages of his journey to that place.

2 And when he had gone over those parts, and had given them much exhortation, he came into Greece,

3 And *there* abode three months. And when the Jews laid wait for him, as he was about to sail into Syria, he purposed to return through Macedonia.

4 And there accompanied him into Asia Sopater of Berea; and of the Thessalonians, Aristarchus and Secundus; and Gaius of Derbe, and Timotheus; and of Asia, Tychicus and Trophimus.

2 And when he had gone through those parts, and had given them much exhortation,

3 he came into Greece. And when he had spent three months *there*, and a plot was laid against him by the Jews, as he was about to set sail for Syria, he determined to return through

4 Macedonia. And there accompanied him ¹as far as Asia Sopater of Berea, the son of Pyrrhus; and of the Thessalonians, Aristarchus and Secundus; and Gaius of Derbe, and

¹ Many ancient authorities omit *as far as Asia*.

NOTES.—1. *After the uproar*: That is, the tumult over "Diana of the Ephesians," narrated in chapter 19. *And embraced them* ("took leave of them," Rev. Ver.): Embracing would be included in these farewell greetings, but also words of farewell. It is also stated that he "exhorted them;" this being inserted in the best Greek text before "took leave of them" (Rev. Ver.). *To go into Macedonia*. As we have already seen, he went first to Troas to meet Titus, with his news from the church at Corinth (see 2 Cor. 2: 12). While he was there he labored in the gospel, and the Lord seemed to open the way for him: but he was too anxious to hear from Corinth, to remain without tidings; and, as Titus did not come, he crossed over into Macedonia, with the hope of meeting him there. After the arrival of Titus, Paul wrote his Second Epistle to the Corinthians (see 2 Cor. 9: 2, 4).

2. *And when he had gone over those parts*: We should learn from Acts of only a visit to the several places in Macedonia where he had labored previously; *viz.*, Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea; but in Rom. 15:19 we learn that he had preached the gospel *as far as to Illyricum*, a district lying west of Macedonia, and between that and Italy; and, as this is the only place where that visit to Illyricum can be put in, it is probable that Illyricum is to be included in this statement. *And had given them much exhortation*: This expression is one that is used where the persons labored with are already disciples. It would indicate, therefore, that the time was occupied mostly in revisiting the churches of Macedonia. *Greece*: By this is meant here Achaia, or Southern Greece, as distinguished from Macedonia. This is the only place in which the word occurs in the New Testament.

3. *And there abode three months*: Probably in Corinth, as this had been the principal scene of his labors there. *When the Jews laid wait for him* ("A plot was laid against him by the Jews," Rev. Ver.): It does not appear that this plot hastened his departure, but it changed his route. They had laid their plans with reference to his departure by sea,—probably by a certain vessel,—and he threw them off the scent by going off suddenly in another direction. *To sail into Syria* ("to set sail for Syria," Rev. Ver.): That is, for any port of Syria to which he might find a vessel sailing. *To return through Macedonia*: And from there to Asia Minor, where he could ship for Syria.

4. *Into Asia* ("as far as Asia," Rev. Ver.): But there is good authority for omitting it altogether. It seems, from verses 5 and 6, that they left the apostle at some point in the journey,—possibly at Philippi, where he made a halt,—and crossed over to Troas, where they waited for him. Of the companions of Paul mentioned here, Aristarchus is mentioned in chapters 19:29; 27:2; Col. 4:10; Philem. 24; Tychicus in 2 Tim. 4:12; and Trophimus in chapter 21:29; 2 Tim. 4:20. Sopater is called here the son of Pyrrhus (Rev. Ver.). From Acts 21:29 we learn that Trophimus was an Ephesian.

5 These going before tarried for us at Troas.

6 And we sailed away from Philippi after the days of unleavened bread, and came unto them to Troas in five days; where we abode seven days.

7 And upon the first *day* of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight.

8 And there were many lights in the upper chamber, where they were gathered together.

9 And there sat in a window a certain young man named Eutychus, being fallen into a deep sleep: and as Paul was long preaching, he sunk down with sleep, and fell down from the third loft, and was taken up dead.

Timothy; and of Asia, Tychicus and Trophimus. But these ¹ had gone before, and were waiting for us at Troas. And we sailed away from Philippi after the days of unleavened bread, and came unto them to Troas in five days; where we tarried seven days.

7 And upon the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread, Paul discoursed with them, intending to depart on the morrow; and prolonged his speech until midnight. And there were many lights in the upper chamber, where we were gathered together. And there sat in the window a certain young man named Eutychus, borne down with deep sleep; and as Paul discoursed yet longer, being

¹ Many ancient authorities read *came, and were waiting.*

6. *After the days of unleavened bread*: That is, the Passover. It is not said definitely that they staid in Philippi on account of this, and it may be a mere notation of time; but it is quite probable that there was a simple observance of the day, with the new meaning that Christianity had put into it. "Christ our passover" had been slain, and had risen again. *In five days*: The language here is such as to emphasize the duration of the voyage; and, as the distance is only about one hundred and fifty miles, two days is the usual time. What delayed them, we are not told. It is noticeable that Luke begins to speak here again in the first person, saying, "We sailed," etc. He dropped it in the sixteenth chapter, indicating that he left Paul at Philippi, on the second missionary journey, seven years before this; and now we find him resuming it at Philippi.

7. *Upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread*: This is interesting, as being the one place in the New Testament where the religious observance of the Lord's Day is spoken of. There is no indication in the New Testament of the observance of the day as a sabbath, a day of rest; but there are a few passages, which, taken in connection with the custom of the Church in the second century, do point to the growth of a tendency to observe the Lord's Supper on that day with such worship as naturally went with that. *The disciples* ("we," Rev. Ver.). *Paul preached* ("discoursed," Rev. Ver.): The common words for preaching in the New Testament denote the deliverance of a message, of glad tidings. This means simply that he discoursed, or reasoned with them. *Ready to depart on the morrow* ("intending to depart," Rev. Ver.): This is put in probably, both to account for the discourse, and for the length of it. Paul had a premonition that these were his last words to them (see verse 25).

8. *Many lights in the upper chamber*: The third story (see verse 9). Why these lights are mentioned, it is difficult to say; probably to account for the immediate knowledge of the accident to Eutychus.

9. *In a window*: An opening for light and air, uncovered by glass; sometimes they were covered with lattices, sometimes not. This window would open upon the street, or the court of the house; and in either case the fall would be upon the ground beneath.

10 And Paul went down, and fell on him, and embracing him said, Trouble not yourselves; for his life is in him.

11 When he therefore was come up again, and had broken bread, and eaten, and talked a long while, even till break of day, so he departed.

12 And they brought the young man alive, and were not a little comforted.

13 ¶ And we went before to ship, and sailed unto Assos, there intending to take in Paul: for so had he appointed, minding himself to go afoot.

14 And when he met with us at Assos, we took him in, and came to Mitylene.

15 And we sailed thence, and came the next day over against Chios; and the next day we arrived at Samos, and tarried at Trogyllium; and the next day we came to Miletus.

10 borne down by his sleep he fell down from the third story, and was taken up dead. And Paul went down, and fell on him, and embracing him said, Make ye no ado; for his life is in him.

11 And when he was gone up, and had broken the bread, and eaten, and had talked with them a long while, even till break of day, so 12 he departed. And they brought the lad alive, and were not a little comforted.

13 But we, going before to the ship, set sail for Assos, there intending to take in Paul: for so had he appointed, intending

14 himself to go ¹by land. And when he met us at Assos, we took him in, and came to Mitylene.

15 And sailing from thence, we came the following day over against Chios; and the next day we touched at Samos; and ²the day after we came to Miletus.

¹ Or, on foot. ² Many ancient authorities insert *having tarried at Trogyllium*.

And as Paul was long preaching ("discoursed yet longer," Rev. Ver.): Longer, that is, than was expected.

10. *Trouble not yourselves*: This word does not denote mental disturbance, but the wailing that they would set up over the dead man. ("Make ye no ado," Rev. Ver.)

For his life is in him: That is, it had returned after Paul's embracing him.

11. *And had broken bread* ("the bread," Rev. Ver.): The Lord's Supper had been deferred, to listen to Paul's discourse. Now the discourse had been interrupted by the accident; and, when they returned to the chamber, he began the long-deferred meal. *And talked a long while*: "Conversed" would give the idea better, or, as the Revised Version has it, "talked with them," not to them. What he had to say further to them was conveyed in the familiar talk about the table.

12. *And they brought the young man alive* ("the lad," Rev. Ver.): He appears from this to have been quite young. It would appear from this also, that after his resuscitation he had recovered only gradually, and so had come up into the chamber where they were, for the first time, only after Paul's departure. *And were not a little comforted*: Their grief over Paul's departure was alleviated by the restoration of the boy.

13. *Assos*: A seaport on the Adramyttine Gulf, about twenty miles south of Troas. *Intending himself to go by land*: Why he did this we are not told, and it is useless to conjecture.

14. *Mitylene*: The chief town of the island of Lesbos, situated on its eastern shore. This marks a stage in the journey probably, a place where they anchored for the night, as the course just beyond this is quite difficult.

15. *Over against Chios*: The next large island on the coast, south of Lesbos. The language implies that they anchored off the coast, instead of putting into harbor, for the night. *We arrived at Samos*: If we retain the words that follow,—viz., *and tarried at Trogyllium*,—the meaning would be, that they simply touched at Samos, or passed by it, and anchored for the night at Trogyllium on the coast opposite; but the

16 For Paul had determined to sail by Ephesus, because he would not spend the time in Asia: for he hastened, if it were possible for him, to be at Jerusalem the day of Pentecost.

16 For Paul had determined to sail past Ephesus, that he might not have to spend time in Asia; for he was hastening, if it were possible for him, to be at Jerusalem the day of Pentecost.

words are probably to be omitted (Rev. Ver.). *Miletus*: A town on the coast, or near it, some thirty miles south of Ephesus.

16. *Because he would not spend the time in Asia*: In order that he might not have to delay in Asia. He knew that if he went to this place, where there were so many associations and people that he loved, he would probably be tempted to delay, when he was in a great hurry. *Pentecost*: There were seven weeks between Passover and Pentecost, and of these more than two were gone already.

LESSON II.

PAUL AT MILETUS.—Acts 20:17-27.

17 ¶ And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called the elders of the church.

17 And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called to him the elders ¹ of the church. And when

¹ Or, *presbyters*.

A GENERAL VIEW.—In this lesson the apostle reviews the work in Asia, and forecasts the future, both for himself and for his disciples. His work there, while it had reached in its effects all the provinces on the coast east of the Ægean, which made what was then called Asia, was all of it done in Ephesus. The church in Ephesus had been the centre of his work and influence during his third missionary journey, as Corinth had in his second. It is well to have the salient points of that work in view, in studying this farewell address. His first work, following his usual custom, was done in the synagogue, where he labored three months, teaching the Jews his spiritual doctrine of the kingdom of God, in opposition to their worldly view of it. Then, meeting with his usual opposition from the Jews, who were more hostile to him than to the other teachers of the new religion, because he would break down all the barriers between the chosen people and the Gentiles, he left the synagogue, and began teaching in the school of Tyrannus. Here he met both Jews and Greeks, and taught daily for two years; reaching in this way men from all parts of Asia, as they passed in and out of the metropolis on their various errands. Special points in his work were his success in breaking up the practice of magical arts among his hearers, and the disturbance made by his inroads on the local worship of Diana. It was now only a year since he had left Ephesus, and these events were therefore fresh in his mind. Moreover, Paul did not expect to return. He was looking forward to persecutions in Jerusalem; and, if he escaped these, to work in Rome, and even farther west. And so he commits the church to the care of its elders and to the grace of God.

NOTES.—17. *From Miletus he sent to Ephesus*: Paul and his companions seem to have had some control over the movements of the vessel, which, in this case at least, waited on their movements. They may have chartered it. The distance between Miletus and Ephesus is about thirty miles. *The elders of the church*: These were a body of men selected from the church by the apostle or his assistants, to exercise a general oversight over its affairs. They were not a teaching body, though teaching was done

18 And when they were come to him, he said unto them, Ye know, from the first day that I came into Asia, after what manner I have been with you at all seasons,

19 Serving the Lord with all humility of mind, and with many tears, and temptations, which befall me by the lying in wait of the Jews:

20 And how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have shewed you, and have taught you publicly, and from house to house,

21 Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance

they were come to him, he said unto them,

Ye yourselves know, from the first day that I set foot in Asia, after what manner I was with you all the time, serving the Lord with all lowliness of mind, and with tears, and with trials which befall me by the plots of the Jews: 19 how that I shrank not from declaring unto you any thing that was profitable, and teaching you publicly, and from house to 20 house, testifying both to Jews and to Greeks repentance toward God, and faith toward

a little later by some of its members. The office and its name were copied from the synagogue.

18. *From the first day that I came into Asia* ("set foot in," Rev. Ver.): By Asia is meant here, as we have seen, the provinces on the eastern coast of the Aegean Sea. *After what manner I have been with you at all seasons*: How I conducted, or lived, all the time. Paul's object here in calling attention to himself, his faithfulness and disinterestedness, was to stimulate these elders by his example. But, whether for one purpose or another, this mention of himself is frequent and characteristic with the apostle. See 2 Cor. 1: 12-14; 11: 16-12: 10. Phil. 3: 4-17. 1 Thess. 1: 5-2: 12. 2 Tim. 3: 10, 11; 4: 6-8. This address may be analyzed as follows: The general object is to stimulate them to faithfulness in their care of the church; and he does this, first, by holding up before them his own example (18-21); secondly, by reminding them that he is about to leave them, and to go out into an unknown and perilous future (22-27); and, thirdly, by showing them the perils to which he sees the church is to be exposed (28-35).

19. *Serving the Lord*: This shows what his course had been among them. By "the Lord," he means here Jesus. The verb denotes the service of a slave, and is used in the New Testament of Christian service, because believers regarded themselves as belonging to the Lord. *With all humility of mind*: What this grace is, exactly, is shown in Phil. 2: 3; Col. 3: 12; 1 Pet. 5: 5. It is that modest estimate of himself that leads a man to think of others first. The word had only low meanings and associations before Christ glorified humility by his own example and teaching. *With many tears*: Omit *many* (Rev. Ver.). *Temptations*: Should be *trials* (Rev. Ver.). The word denotes that which tries or tests a man, whatever it may be; and here, sufferings, as having that effect. *By the lying in wait of the Jews* ("the plots," Rev. Ver.): The apostle refers to something here that Luke does not mention in his account: but chapter 19:9 does mention an opposition of the Jews, that would naturally lead to persecution; and 1 Cor. 15: 32 sq., 16: 9; and 2 Cor. 1: 8-11, show that the apostle was in constant danger there from some source.

20. The language here is a little difficult to render: but the Revised Version gives it with sufficient accuracy: *I shrank not from declaring to you any thing that was profitable, and teaching you*. This unshaking declaration of the truth was something worthy of mention, when Christianity was repugnant to both Jews and Gentiles, and when the form in which Paul presented it excited the bitter opposition of the Jewish section of the Church. *Publicly, and from house to house*: The first denotes the teaching that he would do in such public places as the synagogues, or the school of Tyrannus. The second does not denote, probably, strictly private work with individuals or families, but in such private assemblies as would assemble in houses.

21. *Testifying both to the Jews and also to the Greeks* ("both to Jews and

toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.

22 And now, behold, I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there:

23 Save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me.

24 But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.

22 our Lord Jesus ¹Christ. And now, behold, I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall

23 befall me there: save that the Holy Ghost testifieth unto me in every city, saying that bonds

24 and afflictions abide me. But I hold not my life of any account, as dear unto myself,
²so that I may accomplish my course, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace

25 of God. And now, behold, I

¹ Many ancient authorities omit *Christ*. ² Or, *in comparison of accomplishing my course*.

to Greeks," Rev. Ver.): The idea of testimony, witness, is of frequent occurrence in the New-Testament representations of Christian teaching; because the things taught by them are matters, not so much of thought or speculation, as of experience. **Repentance toward God:** Repentance is the inward change which takes place at conversion,—the new view of things that one takes, and the change of purpose that accompanies it. God is the special object of this change: it is toward him that the man turns, and away from his sin. **And faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ:** Faith is the attitude of the mind toward religion, regarded as a great body of spiritual facts and ideas. It is the man's assent to these truths,—the yielding to them in such a way that they control and influence him. Christ is the object of this faith, as the truth which has this power to master the man is contained in him.

22. **Bound in the spirit:** That is, inwardly constrained, impelled by considerations which appealed to his higher nature. **Not knowing the things that shall befall me there:** He felt constrained to go, in spite of this uncertainty about his fate.

23. **Save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city:** Through prophets, speaking under the influence of the Holy Spirit. That it was this, and not a mere inward suggestion, is clear from the statement that he met such predictions in every city. **Abide me:** Await me. These predictions are none of them mentioned in the history until later (chap. 21: 4, 11); but omissions in the very brief narrative of the Acts are not damaging. Aside from these predictions, Paul must have known that he was taking his life in his hands by going up to Jerusalem, where he was the best hated man in all Jewry. He had made himself conspicuous by his conversion from zealous Judaism to equally zealous Christianity, and by founding a school of Christian thought, and becoming the promulgator of a form of Christianity, specially obnoxious to Judaism. Moreover, he was now in the midst of that conflict with the Judaizers which marked him out as the special foe of the current Judaism. It was the period of his epistles to the Galatians, Romans, and Corinthians.

24. **But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself** ("but I hold not my life of any account, as dear unto myself," Rev. Ver.). **So that I might finish my course with joy:** Omit *with joy* (Rev. Ver.). This denotes, probably, his object in placing so little value on his life. It is in order that he may accomplish his course, an object with which care for his life would interfere. By *course*, Paul means here his life looked at as a race toward a goal,—the accomplishment of the purpose of life. Mere life, without attainment of its object, he counts of no value. For examples of this use, see 13: 25; 1 Cor. 9: 24; Gal. 2: 2; Phil. 2: 16; 2 Tim. 4: 7. **And the ministry:** *Service* conveys the idea better than the technical term *ministry*, which has come to have too official a meaning. **The gospel of the grace of God:** Or, as

25 And now, behold, I know that ye all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, shall see my face no more.

26 Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I *am* pure from the blood of all *men*.

27 For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God.

know that ye all, among whom I went about preaching the kingdom, shall see my face no more. Wherefore I testify unto you this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men. For I shrank not from declaring unto you the whole counsel of God.

we might paraphrase it, the glad tidings that God is gracious, that he regards man with favor, and has sent his Son into the world, not to condemn it, but that the world through him might be saved.

25. *I know*: Not as a matter of predictive certainty,—for the predictions made in every city pointed to only bonds and afflictions, not to death,—but he had a presentiment that it would end that way. When he was awaiting trial in Rome, four years later, he took a more cheerful view of the situation, and thought that he should be released (see Phil. 2: 24; Philem. 22). *Ye all, among whom I have gone preaching*: Paul is here thinking of a wider audience than these Ephesian elders. His thought takes in the wide circuit of his labors in Greece and Asia Minor, with the converts made, and the churches formed, by him.

26. *Wherefore I take you to record this day* ("I testify unto you," Rev. Ver.). *Pure from the blood of all men*: That is, if any one perishes, it will not be for any remissness on the part of Paul. He has done his utmost to deliver them from their fate.

27. *All the counsel of God*: His purpose and plan to save men. All the length and breadth, the depth and height, of this saving thought of God, this wisdom of God that is folly to men, he had declared to them.

HINTS FOR TEACHERS.—The self-renunciation of the apostle. His devotion to truth. His application of the truth to the needs of men. His noble carelessness of life, as compared with the ends of life. His consciousness of rectitude. The gospel of the grace of God. Repentance toward God, and faith toward Jesus Christ.

LESSON III.

PAUL'S FAREWELL.—Acts 20:28-38.

A GENERAL VIEW.—We have given already a general analysis of this farewell address, and an account of the circumstances in which it was made, and of the work in Ephesus to which it refers. A more particular analysis of this closing part of the address shows that it consists of two parts: first, a warning against the false teachers that Paul foresees will come in to subvert his teaching, and against the seeds of heresy that he sees already sown within the Church itself. In order to understand this warning, we have to remember again that this was the period of Paul's controversy with the Judaizing faction of the Church, who wished to make Christianity a mere appendix of Judaism; and that their emissaries were propagating their views in all Paul's churches. But the errors that he saw germinating in the Church itself were of a different kind, and peculiar to the soil. There was in Asia Minor a tendency to speculate and philosophize in a crude way about religion, that led to asceticism, to an emphasis of forms in religion, such as the observance of set days, to angel-worship, and to an association of Jesus with beings that were neither God nor man. The second part of this close of the address is an exhortation to these Ephesian elders to imitate the apostle's disinterestedness, and to earn their support by the labor of their hands, instead of claiming pay for their labors in the Church.

28 ¶ Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.

29 For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock.

30 Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.

28 Take heed unto yourselves, and to all the flock, in the which the Holy Ghost hath made you ¹ bishops, to feed the church of ² God, which he ³ purchased with

29 his own blood. I know that after my departing grievous wolves shall enter in among you, not

30 sparing the flock; and from among your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after

31 them. Wherefore watch ye,

¹ Or, overseers. ² Many ancient authorities read the Lord. ³ Gr. acquired.

NOTES. —28. *Take heed therefore*: Omit *therefore* (Rev. Ver.). *To yourselves, and to all the flock*: He feels that the first thing for a man to do, who has charge of others, is to care for his own character and spiritual standing (see 1 Tim. 3: 1-7). The following verses show that he had in mind specially their adherence to the truth taught them. *The Holy Ghost hath made you overseers*: The word for *overseers* is the same that is elsewhere translated *bishops*, and it is so rendered here in the Revised Version; but as the word is used here specially with reference to its figurative meaning, and its fitness to go along with the designation of the Church as a flock, it is well to bear this meaning in mind, even if we do not translate it so. This statement that they were constituted overseers by the Holy Spirit refers to the fitness for their office conferred by the Spirit, and also to his guidance in the choice of them (see Rom. 12: 4-8; 1 Cor. 12: 4-11, 28-31). *To feed the church of God*: The Church of the Lord. This reading has not been adopted in the Revised Version; but it is far the more probable of the two, and has the approval of the American revisers. The word for *feed* is derived from the Greek for *shepherd*, and means *to tend a flock*. The feeding is only a part of the service. All the language in this and verse 29 is taken from the figure of the Church as a flock. This clause denotes the object for which they were appointed overseers. *Which he hath purchased with his own blood*: This is one of the figurative representations of the results accomplished by the death of our Lord. It was the price that he paid to deliver his people from their bondage, and to make them his own. The attempts that have been made to carry out the figure, and to show who it was to whom the price was paid, and so on, are examples of the unlawful pushing of figurative language (see John 10: 11, 15).

29. *For I know this*: Should be simply *I know* (Rev. Ver.). *After my departing*: This may be simply a mark of time, showing when this danger will threaten them; but probably there is also an intimation that the two events are connected with each other, and that these false teachers would take advantage of Paul's absence to carry out their plans. This was their procedure at Corinth and in Galatia. *Shall grievous wolves enter in*: The only heresy of any prominence, and especially the one that engrossed Paul's mind at this time, was that of the Judaizers. These men were active and aggressive in organizing opposition to Paul wherever he labored, and there is every reason to suppose that these are referred to here.

30. *Also of your own selves*: The indications of this were probably of a different kind. The Judaizing error was brought in from outside, while this was a native growth. We can gather the general nature of it from the Epistles to the Ephesians, the Colossians, and from the First Epistle to Timothy. There was a tendency to speculate on the origin of things, to cultivate asceticism in regard to marriage, and to eating and drinking, to angel-worship, and to unworthy views of the person of Jesus. These things existed as yet only in germ, but Paul warns them against these beginnings of error. *To draw away disciples* ("the disciples," Rev. Ver.): That is, to draw away those who were already disciples of Jesus.

31 Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears.

32 And now, brethren, I command you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.

33 I have coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel.

34 Yea, ye yourselves know, that these hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me.

35 I have showed you all things, how that so laboring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember

remembering that by the space of three years I ceased not to admonish every one night and day with tears. And now I

32 command you to ¹God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build *you* up, and to give *you* the inheritance among all 33 them that are sanctified. I covetted no man's silver, or gold, or 34 apparel. Ye yourselves know that these hands ministered unto my necessities, and to them that 35 were with me. In all things I gave you an example, how that so laboring ye ought to help the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he himself said, It is more

¹ Some ancient authorities read *the Lord*.

31. *Therefore watch*: The figure of a flock is kept up in this word. They are to watch the flock, and see that none are devoured by wolves, nor led astray by designing men. *And remember* ("remembering," Rev. Ver.): It is not simply *watch and remember*, but *watch because you remember*. *Keep my example in mind, as a stimulus to watchfulness in yourselves*. *Three years*: Chapter 19: 10 says *two years*. It was probably something above the one, and under the other; and exactness is not aimed at in either account. *To warn* ("to admonish," Rev. Ver.): He was not warning them of these possible dangers for three years, but reproofing and correcting them, with the anxiety and tears that his deep interest in them made the work cost him. *Night and day*: In season and out.

32. *And now, brethren*: Omit *brethren* (Rev. Ver.). *I command you to God*: I leave you in his hands. He commits the church to them, and them to God. *And to the word of his grace*: The grace here denotes the subject of this word,—the content of it,—as in the expression, *the glad tidings of the grace of God*, verse 24. His commanding them to this word indicates that he has in mind its power to keep and strengthen them (see John 17: 17). *Which is able*: Who is able. The reference is probably to God, as the principal subject of thought; and also as being the more probable agent in giving them the inheritance spoken of. *And to give you an inheritance* ("the inheritance," Rev. Ver.): The inheritance referred to is the final glory of the Messianic kingdom (see Eph. 1: 14, 18; 5: 5; 1 Pet. 1: 4). The *building up* is the favorite figure by which the apostle denotes the formation of the Christian character, by which they are prepared for this inheritance.

34. *Yea*: Omit (Rev. Ver.). *Ye yourselves know*: And so he does not need to tell them. He can appeal to their own knowledge to confirm what he says. *That these hands ministered unto my necessities*: Luke does not mention this in his account of Paul's stay in Ephesus; but he does speak of his working at his trade of tent-making in Corinth, and in 1 Cor. 4: 11, 12 he speaks of working *with his own hands unto this present hour*. Now, as this epistle was written from Ephesus, it shows that his statement about ministering to his needs with his own hands at Ephesus is true. Paul recognizes that he, and all who do spiritual work, are entitled to support (see 1 Cor. 9); but he voluntarily relinquishes this for the sake of increasing the efficiency of his work as an apostle, and he exhorts them to imitate his example of self-denial. *To them that were with me*: His companions and assistants.

35. *I have showed you all things*: In all things I showed you (by example).

the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.

36 ¶ And when he had thus spoken, he kneeled down, and prayed with them all.

37 And they all wept sore, and fell on Paul's neck, and kissed him,

38 Sorrowing most of all for the words which he spake, that they should see his face no more. And they accompanied him unto the ship.

blessed to give than to receive.

36 And when he had thus spoken, he kneeled down, and prayed

37 with them all. And they all wept sore, and fell on Paul's

38 neck, and kissed him, sorrowing most of all for the word which he had spoken, that they should behold his face no more. And they brought him on his way unto the ship.

Ye ought to support the weak ("to help," Rev. Ver.) : Opinion is divided as to the meaning. Some think that support of the poor is meant: others think that *the weak* are those not firmly fixed in Christian faith, and who might look on their work as being performed for the pay if they received support. Their idea is, that Paul means that such would be helped by seeing them supporting themselves, so that all suspicion of such motive would be removed. This view seems the more probable. **And to remember the words of the Lord Jesus:** These words are not preserved for us in the Gospels. Whether they became known to Paul through oral or written records of the life and sayings of Jesus, we do not know. They are so evidently genuine, that we should accept them from any source. As applied to the case in hand, they mean that a man is happier in bestowing the help on others that would accompany an entirely unrequited service, than in receiving the compensation that he might justly demand for his work.

37. **They all wept sore:** They gave themselves up to great demonstrations of sorrow. The language includes not only weeping, but all the signs of lamenting, in which Eastern people were profuse. **And kissed him:** The language is intensive. They kissed him much and tenderly.

HINTS FOR TEACHERS.—The motive for working in behalf of other men which Christ's sacrifice of himself for them makes. God building us up. The power of God's truth to keep men from falling. The value of a good example in exhorting other men to goodness. The nobleness of sacrificing, for the sake of others, what we might justly demand for ourselves. The reward of living so that others will miss us and lament us.

LESSON IV.

PAUL GOING TO JERUSALEM.—*Acts 21:1-14.*

A GENERAL VIEW.—Paul's purpose in going to Jerusalem at this time was to convey to the church in that city the contribution for their poor that he had been collecting from his Gentile churches. For some reason, while the early Christians were generally poor, the church at Jerusalem was especially so; so that, in the first conference that Paul had with the apostles there, it was part of his agreement with them, that he should remember their poor (Gal. 2: 10). Probably this poverty arose from the fact that it was a specially proscribed and persecuted church. The opposition to Christianity at this period was mainly Jewish, and not Gentile; and the headquarters of that opposition was Jerusalem. Paul was moved to relieve this poverty, not only by his compassion and by his agreement with the older apostles, but by his desire to promote harmony between the Jewish and Gentile sections of the Church. He would consent to no abatement of principle for this purpose; but he saw in this condition of things at Jerusalem an opportunity for his Gentile churches to show their good-will toward the mother-church, in such a way as to soften hard feelings, and promote unity. He was already, before he had begun his missionary

1 And it came to pass, that after we were gotten from them, and had launched, we came with a straight course unto Coos, and the *day* following unto Rhodes, and from thence unto Patara:

2 And finding a ship sailing over unto Phenicia, we went aboard, and set forth.

3 Now when we had discovered Cyprus, we left it on the left hand, and sailed into Syria, and landed at Tyre: for there the ship was to unlade her burden.

4 And finding disciples, we tarried there seven days: who said to Paul through the Spirit, that he should not go up to Jerusalem.

1 And when it came to pass that we were parted from them, and had set sail, we came with a straight course unto Cos, and the next day unto Rhodes, and from thence unto Patara: and having found a ship crossing over unto Phenicia, we went aboard, and set sail. And when we had come in sight of Cyprus, leaving it on the left hand, we sailed unto Syria, and landed at Tyre: for there the ship was to unlade her burden. And having found the disciples, we tarried there seven days: and these said to Paul through the Spirit, that he should not set foot in Je-

work, the messenger of the church at Antioch to Jerusalem on such an errand of relief; and in the letters to the Corinthians, the Romans, and the Galatians, written at about the time of our lesson, we find frequent reference to a systematic effort, extending over several years, to raise a sum of money from the churches of Achaia, Macedonia, and Galatia, for this purpose. He considered the matter of sufficient importance to go himself as the bearer of this, together with the messengers from the churches.

NOTES. — 1. *And had launched* ("set sail," Rev. Ver.). *We came with a straight course unto Coos* ("Cos," Rev. Ver.): They had the wind behind them, and so were able to make a straight run, without tacking. Cos was an island on the coast, south-west of Miletus, and about forty miles distant. It was an island of some commercial importance, and had a considerable sprinkling of Jews among its inhabitants. There was a town of the same name on the north-east corner of the island, and possibly it was here that they stopped for the night. *Rhodes*: A larger island than Cos, lying south-west of it, at a distance of between forty and fifty miles. It had considerable eminence in Grecian history, and continued to be an important place in Christian history. Its principal city was Rhodes, on the northern coast of the island; and probably Paul's party anchored there for the night. *Patara*: This is the single instance in which this place is mentioned in the Scriptures. It was a city lying immediately east of Rhodes, and distant about forty miles, just where the coast of Asia Minor turns eastward, and becomes the northern coast of the Mediterranean, instead of the eastern coast of the Ægean Sea. Apollo was the deity of the place.

2. *Sailing over unto Phenicia* ("crossing over," Rev. Ver.): They had reached a point in their journey where they were to stop skirting the coast, and were to strike in a south-east course across the Mediterranean to Phenicia. Here, therefore, they left the vessel that had brought them so far, and found another going in their direction.

3. *Now when we had discovered Cyprus*: It is a little doubtful if this is a proper use of the word *discover*. *Come in sight of* (Rev. Ver.) is better, or *had a view of* (Hackett). The idea is, that they had a view of it as they passed. *We left it on the left hand*: That is, they passed to the south of it. This was the place of Paul's first missionary work. *Sailed into Syria* ("unto," Rev. Ver.): Syria under the empire included the whole eastern coast of the Mediterranean. *Tyre* was the chief city of Phenicia, situated about two-thirds of the distance down the eastern coast of the Mediterranean. *Was to unlade*: Was unlading. They landed because the ship was unlading.

4. *And finding disciples* ("having found the disciples," Rev. Ver.): That is, they did not find out that there were disciples there, but who and where they were.

5 And when we had accomplished those days, we departed and went our way; and they all brought us on our way, with wives and children, till we were out of the city: and we kneeled down on the shore, and prayed.

6 And when we had taken our leave one of another, we took ship; and they returned home again.

7 And when we had finished our course from Tyre, we came to Ptolemais, and saluted the brethren, and abode with them one day.

8 And the next *day* we that were of Paul's company departed, and came unto Cæsarea; and we entered into the house of Philip the evangelist, which was *one* of the seven; and abode with him.

5 rusalem. And when it came to pass that we had accomplished the days, we departed and went on our journey; and they all, with wives and children, brought us on our way, till we were out of the city: and kneeling down

6 on the beach, we prayed, and bade each other farewell; and we went on board the ship, but they returned home again.

7 And when we had finished the voyage from Tyre, we arrived at Ptolemais; and we saluted the brethren, and abode with 8 them one day. And on the morrow we departed, and came unto Cæsarea: and entering into the house of Philip the evangelist, who was one of the seven,

There is no definite statement of the founding of a church there; but in 11:19 there is a statement, that the disciples scattered by the persecution of the church at Jerusalem went as far as Phœnicia, preaching the word to the Jews. *Through the Spirit:* Under the influence of the Spirit. *That he should not go up to Jerusalem:* There was a mixture evidently of prophetic warning and human inference in this. Evidently the communication of the Spirit was in regard to the "bonds and imprisonment" that awaited him; and, on the strength of that, they argued that it could not be the mind of the Spirit that he should go to Jerusalem. As such Paul accepted the warning, but he felt within himself an inward constraint to go in spite of the bonds (see 20:23, 24; 21:11-14).

5. *Those days* ("the days," Rev. Ver.): That is, the seven days of their stay there, during which the ship was unlading. *And they all brought us on our way:* This is the same word which is translated *accompanied* in 20:38. It was a mark of esteem; and in this case it was not rendered by a group of Paul's own disciples, but by those who had been strangers to him before this week. This makes the unanimity of the tribute more worthy of notice. *On the shore* ("the beach," Rev. Ver.): It is distinguished from a high, rugged coast. The minuteness of the narrative in verses 5 and 6 is evidence of an eye-witness.

7. *And when we had finished our course from Tyre, we came to Ptolemais:* And, finishing our voyage, from Tyre we came to Ptolemais. This completed their whole voyage, not simply that from Tyre. From Tyre to Ptolemais was the last stage of it. Ptolemais was the most southern of the Phœnician cities, lying midway between Tyre and Cæsarea, and about thirty miles from each. Its original name was Accho, and this name remains. Ptolemais was the name given to it at the time of the Macedonian supremacy, and it was retained during the Roman period. *The brethren:* The same remark would apply here as to the disciples in verse 4.

8. *We that were of Paul's company:* Simply *we* (Rev. Ver.). A church reading began here, and the words that follow were inserted to explain who "we" were. *Cæsarea:* The Roman capital of Judæa, built by Herod. *Philip the evangelist, which was one of the seven.* (See chapters 6:5; 8:5-13, 26-40.) His appointment in the church at Jerusalem seems to have been only temporary, and he entered early on the more important work of an evangelist. By this is meant one who went about from place to place, carrying the good news of the gospel. It was a missionary work, as distinguished from that of instructing and building up the churches. For Paul's previous visits to Cæsarea, see 9:30; 18:22.

9 And the same man had four daughters, virgins, which did prophesy.

10 And as we tarried there many days, there came down from Judaea a certain prophet, named Agabus.

11 And when he was come unto us, he took Paul's girdle, and bound his own hands and feet, and said, Thus saith the Holy Ghost, So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle, and shall deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles.

12 And when we heard these things, both we, and they of that place, besought him not to go up to Jerusalem.

13 Then Paul answered, What mean ye to weep and to break mine heart? for I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus.

14 And when he would not be persuaded, we ceased, saying, The will of the Lord be done.

9 we abode with him. Now this man had four daughters, virgins, which did prophesy. And as we tarried there ¹many days, there came down from Judaea a certain prophet, named Agabus.

11 And coming to us, and taking Paul's girdle, he bound his own feet and hands, and said, Thus saith the Holy Ghost, So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle, and shall deliver him into the hands

12 of the Gentiles. And when we heard these things, both we and they of that place besought him

13 not to go up to Jerusalem. Then Paul answered, What do ye, weeping and breaking my heart? for I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus.

14 And when he would not be persuaded, we ceased, saying, The will of the Lord be done.

¹ Or, *some*.

9. *And the same man:* Simply *this man* (Rev. Ver.). The fact given here has no connection with the rest of the history, and is mentioned here simply as a matter of interest about Philip.

10. *Tarried there many days:* Several days. *A certain prophet, named Agabus:* He was evidently the same prophet Agabus who came down from Jerusalem to Antioch, and prophesied a famine (see 11:28). The correspondence is too exact to doubt this. Luke's speaking of him here as an unknown or unmentioned person may be owing to forgetfulness, or to the fact that the previous mention had been so slight.

11. *Paul's girdle:* The girdle, or belt, was a necessary article to confine the loose and flowing garment about the waist. *Shall deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles:* This part of the prophecy was fulfilled in only the most general way. Paul was rescued from the hands of his countrymen by the Roman authorities (see 21:31-33; 23:10, 16-25). Still, in a general way, Paul's imprisonment at Jerusalem, Caesarea, and Rome was due to the Jews. The prophecy took this form, because this was the usual proceeding in grave offences, the trial of which was always kept in the hands of the imperial government. The symbolic action accompanying the prophecy was common (see Is. 20; Jer. 13:1-14; Ezek. 4; 5:1-5, etc.).

12. *Both we:* Paul's companions. They thought evidently, like the disciples at Tyre, that these prophecies were warnings against his going to Jerusalem; but Paul saw in them only a provision enabling him to act intelligently, with his eyes open to the consequences.

13. *What mean ye to weep and to break mine heart?* ("What do ye, weeping and breaking my heart?" Rev. Ver.) Paul is proof against their demonstrations of sorrow, while at the same time he is profoundly stirred by them. He is not indifferent to these threatened dangers, nor to the sorrow that they cause his friends; but he holds to his convictions of duty notwithstanding. He was a very admirable, human man.

14. *The will of the Lord be done:* That is, probably, of the Lord Jesus, as Paul had just spoken of his going to Jerusalem for his sake, and had thus intimated that it was his will.

LESSON V.

PAUL AT JERUSALEM.—Acts 21:15-26.

15 And after those days we took up our carriages, and went up to Jerusalem.

16 There went with us also *certain* of the disciples of Cæsarea, and brought with them one Mnason of Cyprus, an old disciple, with whom we should lodge.

17 And when we were come to Jerusalem, the brethren received us gladly.

15 And after these days we ¹ took up our baggages, and went up 16 to Jerusalem. And there went with us also *certain* of the disciples from Cæsarea, bringing *with them* one Mnason of Cyprus, an early disciple, with whom we should lodge.

17 And when we were come to Jerusalem, the brethren received 18 us gladly. And the day follow-

¹ Or, *made ready*.

A GENERAL VIEW.—This is Paul's fifth visit to Jerusalem since his conversion. The first was in A.D. 39, three years after he became a Christian, and when he received his first introduction to the church. The second was in A.D. 45, during his labor at Antioch in connection with Barnabas, when the two carried an offering from Antioch to the needy mother-church. The third was in A.D. 50, after his first missionary journey, when he and Barnabas went to confer with the church at Jerusalem in regard to the question of circumcising Gentile converts. The fourth was in A.D. 54, at the close of his second missionary journey. In only the first of these visits had the apostle encountered any danger; and then it had been owing altogether to his position as a Christian, and not at all to any peculiarity in his views distinguishing him from other Christians. But now he is going up to Jerusalem as the apostle of a Christianity that proclaimed the absolute freedom of its Gentile converts from obligation to the Jewish law. To be sure, this question had been decided already by the church at Jerusalem, nine years before this; that church giving its judgment that only abstinence from meat offered to idols, from things strangled, and from blood, was necessary. This was a compromise, as it did not allow absolute freedom, and yet required only what was demanded of proselytes of the gate; but this compromise failed to effect any permanent settlement. Things remained quiet under it for a time; but after a while the Judaizers returned to their attack, attempting to undermine Paul in his Gentile churches, denying both his apostolic authority and the truth of his teaching. And Paul, on his side, had taught his Gentile converts that they were free in regard to eating meats offered to idols. This controversy was therefore at its height when Paul arrived in Jerusalem; and, while he was regarded with suspicion by the Jewish Christians, his position intensified the opposition of the Jews to him. Events justified the fears of his friends that his presence in Jerusalem at this time would be attended with the gravest danger.

NOTES.—15. *And after these days*: The several days spent at Cæsarea (verse 10). *We took up our carriages*: We made ready; i.e., we put our goods of various kinds in order for our journey,—not to leave behind, but to take them with us. *And went up to Jerusalem*: A journey of about sixty miles.

16. *And brought with them one Mnason of Cyprus*: Brought us to one Mnason, etc. Either rendering is possible, but this one is preferable because it gives much the better meaning. Nothing further is known about this Mnason of Cyprus. He was probably a Gentile convert, or a converted Hellenist Jew, whose sympathies would be with Paul. *An old disciple*: Not in the sense of *aged*, but opposed to *a new convert*.

17. *The brethren received us gladly*: It is difficult to take the word *brethren* here in a very large sense, considering the report that James gives of the general attitude

18 And the *day* following Paul went in with us unto James; and all the elders were present.

19 And when he had saluted them, he declared particularly what things God had wrought among the Gentiles by his ministry.

20 And when they heard *it*, they glorified the Lord, and said unto him, Thou seest, brother, how many thousands of Jews there are which believe; and they are all zealous of the law:

21 And they are informed of thee, that thou teachest all the Jews which are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, saying that they ought not to circumcise *their* children, neither to walk after the customs.

ing Paul went in with us unto James; and all the elders were present. And when he had saluted them, he rehearsed one by one the things which God had wrought among the Gentiles by 20 his ministry. And they, when they heard it, glorified God; and they said unto him, Thou seest, brother, how many ¹thousands there are among the Jews of them which have believed; and they are all zealous for the law: 21 and they have been informed concerning thee, that thou teachest all the Jews which are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, telling them not to circumcise their children, neither to walk after

¹ Gr. *myriads*.

of the church, and the plan to remove their prejudices that he thinks necessary. It probably refers to the brethren gathered to receive him at the house of Mnason.

18. *Went in with us unto James; and all the elders were present*: This was the official reception of Paul by the officers of the church; and it was here, probably, that he fulfilled his mission, handing over to them the money that he had collected for the church. For "elders" see note on 20: 17. The prominence of James, the brother of the Lord, in the church at Jerusalem, though no official headship is ascribed to him in the New Testament, appears from Acts 9: 27; Gal. 1: 18, 19; Acts 12: 17; 15: 13, 19; Gal. 2: 9.

19. *He declared particularly* ("rehearsed one by one," Rev. Ver.): This statement had been made already in regard to the results of his first missionary journey (chapter 15: 4); and probably in his visit to Jerusalem after the second journey, he had given an account of that. This statement, then, was confined probably to the third journey, just ended.

20. *They glorified the Lord* ("God," Rev. Ver.): *How many thousands*: Literally, ten thousands, or myriads. Probably it is used here of an indefinitely large number. *They are all zealous of the law*: This is a very significant statement, and indicates a grave state of things in the Jewish Church; for evidently Jesus had prepared the way for his disciples to exercise considerable freedom in the matter of ceremonial observance; and so it is indicative of a great re-action, to have it said of the great body of the Jewish believers, that they were zealots for the law. The re-action was probably against Paul's development of the principles taught by Jesus, in his mission to the Gentiles, and was also probably an attempt to conciliate the Jews. This statement is therefore ominous of danger to Paul himself, and to his errand in Jerusalem, which was to conciliate the church there by the generous offering of the Gentile churches.

21. *Thou teachest all the Jews which are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses*: Literally, apostasy from Moses. This information had been brought to them, evidently, by the Judaizers, who had been teaching their false doctrine in Paul's churches. It was malignantly false. Paul's position, in regard to this, is distinctly stated in 1 Cor. 7: 17-24, and was consistently maintained by him, as witness his circumcision of Timothy (chapter 16: 3). He regarded the attempt to impose circumcision on the Gentiles as an endeavor to identify Christianity with Judaism, and to make salvation depend on observance of the Jewish law; and that he therefore opposed strenuously. But, on the other hand, circumcision itself he looked on as an entirely indifferent matter, and all other Jewish observances

22 What is it therefore? the multitude must needs come together: for they will hear that thou art come.

23 Do therefore this that we say to thee: We have four men which have a vow on them;

24 Them take, and purify thyself with them, and be at charges with them, that they may shave *their* heads; and all may know that those things, whereof they were informed concerning thee, are nothing; but that thou thyself also walkest orderly, and keepest the law.

25 As touching the Gentiles which believe, we have written *and* concluded that they observe no such thing, save only that they keep themselves from *things* offered to idols, and from blood, and from strangled, and from fornication.

22 the customs. What is it therefore? they will certainly hear 23 that thou art come. Do therefore this that we say to thee: We have four men which have a 24 vow on them, these take, and purify thyself with them, and be at charges for them, that they may shave their heads: and all shall know that there is no truth in the things whereof they have been informed concerning thee; but that thou thyself also walkest 25 orderly, keeping the law. But as touching the Gentiles which have believed, we ¹wrote, giving judgment that they should keep themselves from things sacrificed to idols, and from blood, and from what is strangled, and from for-

¹ Or, enjoined. Many ancient authorities read *sent*.

with it. For a Jew to practise these things was simply to conform to a national custom, with which Paul, as a Christian teacher, did not meddle. However, this doctrine of the indifference of ceremonial observances probably led some of his followers among the Jews to carry their practice farther than Paul's direct teaching led them; and this may have been exaggerated by his accusers into the charge which we are considering. *The customs*: The Jewish customs enjoined in the law.

22. *What is it therefore?* That is, What is the state of the case? what is to be done? *The multitude must needs come together*: A multitude. That is, of the Jewish Christians. It does not, however, refer to a tumultuous assemblage, but to the crowd that would gather to hear and watch him wherever he appeared. Something would have to be done to satisfy this observant and suspicious multitude. It may be, however, that these words are to be omitted, as in the Revised Version; but, even with this omission, the clause that follows implies somewhat the same course of reasoning.

23. *We have four men that have a vow on them*: A Nazarite vow, as the mention of "shaving," in verse 24, shows.

24. *Purify thyself with them, and be at charges with them, that they may shave their heads* ("be at charges for them," Rev. Ver.): The Nazarite vow pledged the person taking it to abstinence from wine, grapes, and strong drink of any kind; not to cut the hair; and not to touch a dead body. After the completion of the time for which the vow was taken, he was required to offer a he-lamb for a burnt-offering, a ewe-lamb for a sin-offering, a ram for a peace-offering, and various accompaniments of meat and drink offering. Then his head was shaved, as the sign of the completion of his vow. These offerings were burdensome for a poor man, and it was no uncommon thing for charitable persons to assume or share the expense. This is what they asked Paul to do, in order to show his continued respect for Jewish customs, and to allay the prejudice against him on account of his supposed repudiation of them. In order to make this the more marked, it was proposed that he should not only assume the expenses of the four men, but also himself take the vow for the rest of the time. Of course, the meaning is, not that he should pay for the shaving of their heads, but that he should provide the sacrifices necessary to the completion of the vow for which the shaving stood. *And all may know* ("shall know," Rev. Ver.).

25. *We have written*: The *we* is emphatic, as it was their act, the act of the

26 Then Paul took the men, and the next day purifying himself with them entered into the temple, to signify the accomplishment of the days of purification, until that an offering should be offered for every one of them.

26 nication. Then Paul ¹ took the men, and the next day purifying himself with them went into the temple, declaring the fulfilment of the days of purification, until the offering was offered for every one of them.

¹ Or, *took the men the next day, and purifying himself, etc.*

church at Jerusalem, and not of Paul and his associates. The language that is used, here and elsewhere, of this decision of the church, shows that it was regarded as mandatory. **And concluded:** Decreed. These decrees were the requirements for proselytes of the gate. This statement is introduced here to relieve Paul from any apprehension that this proposition is intended to bind the Gentiles in any way. What they wish is, to show that Paul is not attempting to dissuade the Jews from observing the law, and has no relation to the Gentiles.

26. **Purifying himself with them:** That is, taking on himself with them the Nazarite vows of ascetic purity and consecration. **To signify the completion** ("declaring the fulfilment," Rev. Ver.): That is, announcing when the time of the Nazarite vow would end. As we have seen, Paul's compliance with this was no violation of his principles, as he considered all these matters indifferent; but, all the same, his principles tended to the gradual subversion of Judaism, and the substitution of a spiritual Christianity.

LESSON VI.

PAUL ASSAILED.—Acts 21:27-40.

A GENERAL VIEW.—In order to comprehend the situation and events of our lesson, we should remember that it was the feast of Pentecost, and that there were Jews in Jerusalem come from all parts of the world to attend one of the two great annual Jewish festivals. It was now twenty years since Paul's face had been a familiar one at Jerusalem; but, meantime, it had become known and hated to the Jews of the dispersion in the prominent cities of Asia Minor and Greece. Wherever he had gone, he had preached to his countrymen first, and had been uniformly rejected by them. Then he had uniformly turned from them to the Gentiles,—a proceeding which in itself excited their deepest resentment,—and had preached to them a gospel that wholly obliterated the old lines between Jew and Gentile, and proclaimed all to be alike before God. He had emphasized this universality of the gospel, and its independence of Judaism, in such a way as to create opposition in the Church itself. And so the Jews had, in many places, continued to oppose and persecute him after he had left them and gone to the Gentiles. Substantially, this had been the history of his work in Antioch of Pisidia, Iconium, Lystra, in Thessalonica, Berea, Corinth, and in Ephesus. Paul, therefore, had to meet two classes of enemies in Jerusalem: first, his Judaizing opponents within the Church; and, second, these unbelieving and imbibed Jews from the various cities in which his work had been done. He was in a fair way to silence the former by his gifts to the church at Jerusalem, and by his acceptance of the conciliatory advice of the elders of the church. But, in this latter attempt, he only encountered his other enemies. The Jews from Asia, on the watch for something in his conduct which they could use to inflame the multitude against him, put together the fact that he had Gentile associates with him in the city, and that he himself was daily in the temple, and made out of them the charge that he was introducing Gentiles into the temple. It was, of course, false; but the spark fell into inflammable material.

27 And when the seven days were almost ended, the Jews which were of Asia, when they saw him in the temple, stirred up all the people, and laid hands on him,

28 Crying out, Men of Israel, help: This is the man, that teacheth all men everywhere against the people, and the law, and this place: and further brought Greeks also into the temple, and hath polluted this holy place.

29 (For they had seen before with him in the city Trophimus an Ephesian, whom they supposed that Paul had brought into the temple.)

27 And when the seven days were almost completed, the Jews from Asia, when they saw him in the temple, stirred up all the multitude, and laid hands on him,

28 crying out, Men of Israel, help: This is the man, that teacheth all men everywhere against the people, and the law, and this place: and moreover he brought Greeks also into the temple, and hath defiled this holy place.

29 For they had before seen with him in the city Trophimus the Ephesian, whom they supposed that Paul had brought into the temple. And all the city was

NOTES.—27. *The seven days were almost ended:* Were about to be completed. The seven days were probably the time that was left to complete the vow, when Paul entered into it. *The Jews from Asia:* That is, from the provinces on the eastern coast of the Ægean Sea, of which Ephesus was the chief city. Paul was just closing the missionary journey of which Ephesus was the centre; and their grievances against him were fresh in their minds.

28. *Help:* Of course, this cry was uttered in the excitement of the moment, and there was no time to consider much what they should say or do; but, as a matter of fact, the success of their scheme depended on their creating a popular tumult, by which Paul should be put out of the way before the Roman authorities could interfere; and so they call on the multitude to help them against this obnoxious despiser of the Jews. *Against the people, and the law, and this place:* The accusation was skilfully made, and, from a Jewish point of view, was true; for the Jews assumed to be superior to other men, as the people of God, whereas Paul taught that all men were alike before God. He taught against the law, by ignoring its ceremonial part altogether, and showing that men were to be saved by faith, and not by legalism. He relieved this teaching, as much as possible, of its offensiveness, by not attempting to interfere in any way with the Jewish observance of the law; and yet the whole tendency of his teaching was to strip the law of every thing that made it local and peculiar, and to leave nothing except a universal moral law. His teaching was directed against the temple; because, like Jesus himself, he taught the equal sacredness of all places, and denounced the ritualism for which the temple stood. Their persecution of Paul was justifiable, therefore, from their point of view,—that is, there was a radical opposition between them; but the question was about their view of things, and the right to persecute anyway. *Brought Greeks into the temple:* The word *Greeks* here stands for Gentiles generally. There was an outer court, called the court of the Gentiles, that was open to all; but the inner court was reserved for Israelites, and foreigners were forbidden to enter it on pain of death. Into the temple itself none but priests were admitted. It was this inner court, therefore, that is meant here. *And hath polluted this holy place:* That is, made it common by introducing into it others than the holy people to whom it was set apart. This charge was, therefore, the complement of the other. They accused Paul of teaching subversive of Judaism; and here was conduct alleged against him, breaking down the dividing line between Jews and Gentiles in the Jews' most holy place,—the very citadel of their exclusiveness.

29. *Trophimus the Ephesian:* One of the group of disciples who accompanied Paul on his return from Greece to Asia, at the close of his third missionary journey. It appears from this that he continued with the apostle from Asia to Jerusalem. He was very likely one of the delegates from the churches to Jerusalem in the matter of the con-

30 And all the city was moved, and the people ran together: and they took Paul, and drew him out of the temple: and forthwith the doors were shut.

31 And as they went about to kill him, tidings came unto the chief captain of the band, that all Jerusalem was in an uproar.

32 Who immediately took soldiers and centurions, and ran down unto them: and when they saw the chief captain and the soldiers, they left beating of Paul.

33 Then the chief captain came near, and took him, and commanded him to be bound with two chains; and demanded who he was, and what he had done.

34 And some cried one thing, some another, among the multi-

moved, and the people ran together: and they laid hold on Paul, and dragged him out of the temple: and straightway the doors were shut.

31 And as they were seeking to kill him, tidings came up to the ¹ chief captain of the ² band, that all Jerusalem was in confusion. And forthwith he took soldiers and centurions, and ran down upon them: and they, when they saw the chief captain and the soldiers, left off beating Paul.

33 Then the chief captain came near, and laid hold on him, and commanded him to be bound with two chains; and inquired who he was, and what he had done. And some shouted one thing, some another, among the

¹ Or, military tribune. Gr. chiliarch: and so throughout this book. ² Or, cohort.

tribution to the poor Christians of that city. *Whom they supposed that Paul had brought into the temple:* Suppositions are the convenient material for fanatical charges. They saw Trophimus with Paul; they saw Paul himself in the temple; they knew Paul's opinions; and so they inferred that the two had been in the temple together. It is a good way to reason when one is sure of his judge and jury; and in this case these consisted of inflammable, fanatic Jews.

30. *And drew him out of the temple* ("dragged him," Rev. Ver.): The reason of this was, that the temple might not be defiled with blood. The closing of the doors was to shut out the mob.

31. *And as they went about to kill him* ("were seeking to kill him," Rev. Ver.): They had no weapons at hand probably, and were looking around for the readiest way to dispose of him. *Unto the chief captain of the band:* The tribune of the cohort literally. This was the usual garrison kept at Jerusalem by the Roman governor. It was a division of the legion, consisting of about five hundred or six hundred men. Strictly speaking, however, the tribunes, of which there were six to each legion, did not command a cohort, but took turns in commanding the whole legion. But the term came to be applied more loosely; and possibly, in a case like this, where a cohort was detached from the legion for separate service, a tribune might be detailed to command it. The Castle of Antonia, where the garrison was quartered, was within easy call of the temple, being situated at the north-west angle of the temple enclosure, and with flights of steps leading down to it. The commander was thus able to pour into the enclosure any number of men necessary to quell a riot.

32. *Who immediately took soldiers and centurions:* A centurion was in command of a hundred men. The immediateness of this action was in accordance with the Roman policy of keeping their subject populations strictly quiet, as any uproar among the people might be turned against the government; and this was especially so among the Jews, whose Messianic expectations at this time kept them in a continual ferment against Rome.

33. *With two chains:* Binding him to a soldier on each side of him.

34. *Some shouted one thing, some another:* As in the uproar at Ephesus (chapter 19: 32). The crowd, outside of the Jews from Asia, had only the vague, general

tude: and when he could not know the certainty for the tumult, he commanded him to be carried into the castle.

35 And when he came upon the stairs, so it was, that he was borne of the soldiers for the violence of the people.

36 For the multitude of the people followed after, crying, Away with him.

37 And as Paul was to be led into the castle, he said unto the chief captain, May I speak unto thee? Who said, Canst thou speak Greek?

38 Art not thou that Egyptian, which before these days madest an uproar, and leddest out into the wilderness four thousand men that were murderers?

39 But Paul said, I am a man which am a Jew of Tarsus, a city in Cilicia, a citizen of no mean city: and, I beseech thee, suffer me to speak unto the people.

40 And when he had given him license, Paul stood on the stairs, and beckoned with the hand unto

35 crowd: and when he could not know the certainty for the uproar, he commanded him to be brought into the castle. And when he came upon the stairs, so it was, that he was borne of the soldiers for the violence of the crowd; for the multitude of the people followed after, crying, Away with him.

37 And as Paul was about to be brought into the castle, he saith unto the chief captain, May I say something unto thee? And he said, Dost thou know Greek?

38 Art thou not then the Egyptian, which before these days stirred up to sedition and led out into the wilderness the four thousand

39 men of the Assassins? But Paul said, I am a Jew, of Tarsus in Cilicia, a citizen of no mean city: and I beseech thee, give me leave to speak unto

40 the people. And when he had given him leave, Paul, standing on the stairs, beckoned with the hand unto the people; and when

knowledge of Paul's offence that these foreign Jews had brought them, and Lysias could get nothing definite from them. *Into the castle*: The word does not denote the castle itself, but the soldiers' quarters within the castle, — the barracks.

35. *The stairs*: Leading from the temple enclosure up to the castle. *He was borne of the soldiers*: Just how this was done, we cannot tell. For mere safety, all that was necessary would be for the soldiers to put him in the midst of them, and form about him. Probably the pressure upon them crowded the soldiers upon him so, that he was borne off his feet. It was put in here, to show the violence of the crowd.

36. *Away with him*: The cry of the multitude who demanded of Pilate that Jesus be put to death. It is addressed here to Lysias, the Roman commander.

37. *Canst thou speak Greek?* ("Dost thou know Greek?" Rev. Ver.): The commander is surprised that he speaks Greek, supposing him to be the Egyptian of whom he speaks immediately, and of whom he knew that he could not speak that language.

38. *That Egyptian*, etc. ("The Egyptian, which . . . stirred up to sedition and led out into the wilderness the four thousand men of the assassins," Rev. Ver.): This Egyptian is one of whom Josephus gives an account. He brought his followers to the Mount of Olives, where they expected to see the walls of Jerusalem fall down before him; but they were dispersed easily by the Roman forces, and their leader had fled. Lysias supposed that he had ventured out of his retirement, and that the people who had been deceived by him were about to sacrifice him to their wrath. He thought, therefore, that he was apprehending a notorious political criminal. *Assassins* was the common name applied to the bandits who infested Palestine in this turbulent epoch. They formed the nucleus of the revolt which afterwards attached to itself many of the people.

39. *A Jew of Tarsus, . . . a citizen of no mean city*: Paul wishes to bring out distinctly the fact that he was a very different man from the one described.

the people. And when there was made a great silence, he spake unto them in the Hebrew tongue, saying,

there was made a great silence, he spake unto them in the Hebrew language, saying,

40. *In the Hebrew tongue*: That is, in the current Aramaic dialect of Palestine. He would be better understood in that, and it would tend to conciliate the people, to find him using their own language.

LESSON VII.

PAUL'S DEFENCE.—Acts 22:1-21.

1 Men, brethren, and fathers, hear ye my defence which I make now unto you.

2 (And when they heard that he spake in the Hebrew tongue to them, they kept the more silence: and he saith,) 3

I am verily a man which am a Jew, born in Tarsus, a city in Cilicia, yet brought up in this city at the feet

1 Brethren and fathers, hear ye the defence which I now make unto you.

2 And when they heard that he spake unto them in the Hebrew language, they were the more quiet: and he saith,

3 I am a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this city, at the feet of Gamaliel, in-

A GENERAL VIEW.—In this defence of himself before the Jews, Paul adopted the same general line of argument which he followed in reviewing the charges against him before Agrippa, and in his statement of his position made to the Jews at Rome. This was, that what he had done in becoming a Christian, and in his preaching to the Gentiles, had been done by him as a Jew, and involved nothing that was not strictly consistent with his position as a Jew. In fact, this characterized all his thought about Christianity, and its relation to Judaism. There was no break with the religion of the Old Testament, but a fulfilment of its prophecies; and a strict development of its principles. In carrying out this general line of defence, he shows, first, that he was a Jew, instructed in their most famous school, and a zealot withal; and that, therefore, his present position is not in any way due to lack of instruction or of zeal. Secondly, That he was a firm persecutor of Christianity, and had, therefore, no leanings toward the new religion which would account for his present adherence to it. Thirdly, He tells the story of his conversion; showing that he was met in the midst of this career of persecution by an undeniably supernatural appearance to him of the Jesus whom he was persecuting, leaving no room for doubt that his attitude toward him was wrong. Fourthly, He shows that Ananias, at whose hands he received his sight, and by whom he was baptized into the new faith, was also a pious and accepted Jew, who did every thing in the name of the God of their fathers. Fifthly, That his own desire had been to preach to his countrymen, but that Jesus had appeared to him again, appeared, too, while he was praying in the temple, and had sent him to the Gentiles. Every word in this was adapted to convince a fair-minded Jew that the God of the Jews—the one God—had brought Paul where he was; and that his Christianity was the inevitable sequel of his Judaism.

NOTES.—1. *Fathers*: He sees members of the Sanhedrim in the crowd, and includes them in his address.

2. See note on verse 40, in the preceding lesson.

3. *I am . . . a man*, etc. (“I am a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up,” Rev. Ver.): He offsets the fact of his foreign birth with that of his strict Jewish training in

of Gamaliel, and taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers, and was zealous toward God, as ye all are this day.

4 And I persecuted this way unto the death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women.

5 As also the high priest doth bear me witness, and all the estate of the elders: from whom also I received letters unto the brethren, and went to Damascus, to bring them which were there bound unto Jerusalem, for to be punished.

6 And it came to pass, that, as I made my journey, and was come nigh unto Damascus about noon, suddenly there shone from heaven a great light round about me.

7 And I fell unto the ground, and heard a voice saying unto me, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?

8 And I answered, Who art thou, Lord? And he said unto me, I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom thou persecutest.

9 And they that were with me saw indeed the light, and were afraid;

structed according to the strict manner of the law of our fathers, being zealous for God, even as 4 ye all are this day: and I persecuted this Way unto the death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women. As also the high priest doth bear me witness, and all the estate of the elders: from whom also I received letters unto the brethren, and journeyed to Damascus, to bring them also which were there unto Jerusalem in bonds, for to 6 be punished. And it came to pass, that, as I made my journey, and drew nigh unto Damascus, about noon, suddenly there shone from heaven a great light round 7 about me. And I fell unto the ground, and heard a voice saying unto me, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? And I answered, Who art thou, Lord? And he said unto me, I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom thou persecutest. And they that were with me beheld indeed the light, but

Jerusalem. He was no half-Jew, in spite of his birth. *According to the perfect manner* ("the strict manner," Rev. Ver.): That is, with all that strict attention to minutiae and details that characterized Mosaism, especially as it was interpreted in the rabbinical schools. *Zealous toward God*: He had imbibed not only the punctilious strictness of a rabbinical Jew, but also that fierce zeal that belonged to such.

4. *And I persecuted this way*: That is, those belonging to this way. Christianity is conceived as a road in which men walk, a way, or course, of living. It is contrasted here with the Jewish way. This is, in the original, a relative clause, and it reads, *being a zealot for God . . . who persecuted*, etc. He represents his zeal as taking this same form that theirs took.

5. *As also the high priest doth bear me witness*: Is my witness. The high priest meant is the one in office at the time spoken of, and still living. There were two changes in the office during the time of two years within which Paul's conversion may have taken place; so that either Caiaphas, Jonathan, or Theophilus may be meant. *And all the estate of the elders*: The eldership, or presbytery, by which is meant here the Sanhedrim. *Unto the brethren*: That is, the Jews at Damascus. He is speaking now as a Jew.

7. *Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?* This is the turning-point in Paul's career, the thing which turned aside his zeal from Judaism to Christianity. In that moment Jesus became his master, and as sudden as the flash of light must have been the conviction that all his rabbinical interpretation of Judaism must be wrong. He must part company with all his old ideas; since these had made him a persecutor of Christianity, and could not possibly be made to consist with the now established fact of the truth of Jesus' claims.

8. *Who art thou, Lord?* He recognizes that it is some supernatural voice, of God or angel, that has spoken to him, but does not yet know whose it is.

9. *Saw indeed the light, and were afraid; but they heard not the voice*: Omit *and were afraid* (Rev. Ver.). Luke says that they heard the voice, but

but they heard not the voice of him that spake to me.

10 And I said, What shall I do, Lord? And the Lord said unto me, Arise, and go into Damascus; and there it shall be told thee of all things which are appointed for thee to do.

11 And when I could not see for the glory of that light, being led by the hand of them that were with me, I came into Damascus.

12 And one Ananias, a devout man according to the law, having a good report of all the Jews which dwelt *there*,

13 Came unto me, and stood, and said unto me, Brother Saul, receive thy sight. And the same hour I looked up upon him.

14 And he said, The God of our fathers hath chosen thee, that thou shouldest know his will, and see that Just One, and shouldest hear the voice of his mouth.

15 For thou shalt be his witness unto all men of what thou hast seen and heard.

they heard not the voice of him 10 that spake to me. And I said, What shall I do, Lord? And the Lord said unto me, Arise, and go into Damascus; and there it shall be told thee of all things which are appointed for thee to do. 11 And when I could not see for the glory of that light, being led by the hand of them that were with me, I came into Damascus. 12 And one Ananias, a devout man according to the law, well reported of by all the Jews that dwelt there, came unto me, and standing by me said unto me, Brother Saul, receive thy sight. And in that very hour I ¹ looked up on him. 14 And he said, The God of our fathers hath appointed thee to know his will, and to see the Righteous One, and to hear a voice from his mouth. For thou shalt be a witness for him unto all men of what thou hast seen 15 and heard. And now why tarri-

¹ Or, received my sight and looked upon him.

saw no man (chapter 9: 7). The probable explanation is, that they saw the light, but could distinguish no form; and heard the voice, but without understanding what was said.

10. *There it shall be told thee*: In chapter 26: 16-18, Paul omits the whole of the Ananias episode, and so puts into the mouth of Jesus himself what, according to this account, must have been said to him by Ananias. This often happens in condensed narrative.

12. *A devout man according to the law, having a good report of all the Jews*: All that we are told of him in the other account is that he was a disciple. Paul introduces this fact, that he was a devout Jew, in the interest of his argument, to show how his conversion to Christianity was not such as to make him lose his hold on the religion of his fathers. He had received what was evidently a divine revelation; and now he was to be initiated into the new faith by a Jew who was a strict observer of the law, and of good standing among the Jews.

13. *And stood, and said* ("and standing by me, said," Rev. Ver.). *Brother Saul*: This is a significant address, as showing that Ananias considered him already, though not formally, a Christian. *Receive thy sight*: This is the same word that is translated "looked up," in the last part of the verse. Probably it means "look up" in both cases. In this case, the recovery of sight is plainly implied.

14. *The God of our fathers hath chosen thee, that thou shouldest know his will*: That is, probably, his will concerning you. Paul was to be distinguished from other men by having an express revelation of the divine will made to him. The statement that this was done by "the God of our fathers" is also a part of the apostle's argument. *The Righteous One*: See 3: 14; 7: 52. Paul was not only to have God's will declared to him, but to see the Righteous One in whom that will was done perfectly. This actual beholding of Jesus by Paul is referred to in chapter 9: 17; 26: 16; 1 Cor. 15: 8.

15. *His witness unto all men*: Not only Paul's Christianity, but especially his

16 And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.

17 And it came to pass, that, when I was come again to Jerusalem, even while I prayed in the temple, I was in a trance;

18 And saw him saying unto me, Make haste, and get thee quickly out of Jerusalem: for they will not receive thy testimony concerning me.

19 And I said, Lord, they know that I imprisoned and beat in every synagogue them that believed on thee:

20 And when the blood of thy martyr Stephen was shed, I also was standing by, and consenting unto his death, and kept the raiment of them that slew him.

est thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on his name. And it came to pass, that, when I had returned to Jerusalem, and while I prayed in the temple, I fell into a trance, 18 and saw him saying unto me, Make haste, and get thee quickly out of Jerusalem: because they will not receive of thee testimony concerning me. And I said, Lord, they themselves know that I imprisoned and beat in every synagogue them 20 that believed on thee: and when the blood of Stephen thy witness was shed, I also was standing by, and consenting, and keeping the garments of them 21 that slew him. And he said

denial of Jewish exclusiveness, his taking down of the bars between Jews and Gentiles, was in question; and here he shows his divine authority for that.

16. *And wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord:* Two things are noticeable in regard to the New Testament doctrine of the forgiveness of sins: first, that it is generally represented as conditioned on the spiritual state of the man; and, second, that it seems, in some few passages like this, to be connected with baptism. This can only be explained on the ground that baptism is something more than a symbol of a past act, on which act forgiveness is based. Baptism is an act of confession, of public initiation into the Christian life; and confession is a spiritual, and so a proper, condition of forgiveness. *On the name of the Lord* ("on his name," Rev. Ver.).

17. *When I was come again to Jerusalem:* After three years, most of it spent in Arabia (Gal. 1: 17, 18). *Even while I prayed in the temple* ("and while," Rev. Ver.): This circumstance again shows Paul's apologetic purpose. He represents his commission to this part of his work, which was the most repugnant to the Jews, as coming to him when he was performing a Jewish act of worship. It was a divine revelation, coming to him in the sacred precincts of the Jewish temple.

18. *Make haste, and get thee quickly out of Jerusalem:* In chapter 9: 29, 30, it is stated that there was an actual plot of the Jews to put him to death, and that the brethren therefore hastened to get him out of the city. The two accounts may be put together easily, by supposing that the revelation came in to confirm the advice of the brethren; or that the plot against him, and the consequent haste of the brethren to send him away, confirmed the revelation. The reason that the Lord gives is not the danger to be encountered, but the uselessness of his work.

19. *And I said, Lord, they know, etc.:* Paul thought that he saw in this a reason why they would listen to him. He had occupied the same position as they, was recognized by them as a leader, and had been among the most zealous opponents of the new sect. His personal history would have more weight there than anywhere.

20. *Thy martyr Stephen* ("Stephen thy witness," Rev. Ver.): *Martyr* is the Greek word for *witness*, but in English it has come to have the additional meaning of one who seals his testimony by suffering and death; but the Greek word at this time had no such meaning. *Unto his death:* Omit as in Revised Version.

21 And he said unto me, Depart: for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles.

unto me, Depart: for I will send thee forth far hence unto the Gentiles.

21. Depart: for I will send thee . . . unto the Gentiles: Jesus saw, what Paul did not see, that his history was of a kind to convince unprejudiced men, but not prejudiced Jews. Moreover, he saw in Paul a greater adaptation to do a greater work. He had found the man to carry the gospel to the Gentiles, and to give it the necessary breadth of a universal religion. Paul introduces this statement to show that he went to the obnoxious Gentiles, not of his own motion, but because the Lord sent him.

LESSON VIII.

PAUL BEFORE THE COUNCIL.—*Acts 23:1-11.*

A GENERAL VIEW.—Our last lesson closed without giving us an account of the result of Paul's address to the people. In spite of the apostle's carefully prepared defence, it was prejudice, and not reason, that he had to deal with in his audience; and they turned on him with fanatical fury the moment that the real cause of controversy was reached. Then the commander of the Roman garrison ordered him to be scourged, in order to extract from him by torture what he had failed as yet to get out of any one,—the cause of all this uproar against him. But Paul appealed to his Roman citizenship against this; and so finally he brought Paul before the Sanhedrim, that he might have it decided by that tribunal what was the cause of complaint. In order to understand what Paul did there, and the instantaneous effect produced by it, we must keep in mind the radical and bitter hostility between the Pharisees and the Sadducees. They might unite momentarily against a common foe; but one might at any time, by taking sides in one of their controversies, change all that. For the Sadducees represented the waning power of the priesthood, and the Pharisees the rising power of the rabbis; the Sadducees believed in nothing but a written law, while the Pharisees were zealous defenders of an oral law handed down by tradition from Moses; the Sadducees did not receive the doctrine of a future state, because it was not contained in the Pentateuch, while the Pharisees made it a prime article in their traditional code. Added to all this was a difference of spirit: the Pharisees being zealous, punctilious, fanatical Jews; and the Sadducees, easy-going, mild Jews, rather inclined to be worldly and sceptical. Paul was appealing to one of the strongest of even religious prejudices, when he said, “I am a Pharisee.”

1 And Paul, earnestly beholding the council, said, Men *and* brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day.

1 And Paul, looking steadfastly on the council, said, Brethren, I have lived before God in all good conscience until this day.

NOTES.—1. Earnestly beholding the council: Having fixed his gaze on them. It marks the fearlessness of the apostle's demeanor. The council is here the Sanhedrim. **I have lived in all good conscience before God:** The verb means more than simply to live: it denotes the performance of a man's duties as a citizen, and here as a member of the kingdom of God. In one sense, this was, therefore, an answer to the charge brought against him, which was that he was derelict as a Jew, a member of God's chosen people. **In all good conscience:** This was always Paul's boast. He was conscious of fearful mistakes, but he was from the beginning a morally earnest man, squaring his conduct with his conscience. He claims for himself here what he elsewhere allows to the Jews (Rom. 10: 2). Whatever may be the differences, they have a common zeal toward God; and one should not therefore be persecuting the other.

2 And the high priest Ananias commanded them that stood by him to smite him on the mouth.

3 Then said Paul unto him, God shall smite thee, *thou whited wall*: for sittest thou to judge me after the law, and commandest me to be smitten contrary to the law?

4 And they that stood by said, Revilest thou God's high priest?

5 Then said Paul, I wist not, brethren, that he was the high priest: for it is written, Thou shalt not speak evil of the ruler of thy people.

6 But when Paul perceived that the one part were Sadducees, and the other Pharisees, he cried out in the

2 And the high priest Ananias commanded them that stood by him to smite him on the mouth.

3 Then said Paul unto him, God shall smite thee, *thou whited wall*: and sittest thou to judge me according to the law, and commandest me to be smitten

4 contrary to the law? And they that stood by said, Revilest

5 thou God's high priest? And Paul said, I wist not, brethren, that he was high priest: for it is written, Thou shalt not speak evil of a ruler of thy

6 people. But when Paul perceived that the one part were Sadducees, and the other Phari-

2. *The high priest Ananias*: He was appointed to the office in A.D. 48, and was deposed by Felix in A.D. 60 or 61. *Them that stood by him*: The official attendants of the court. *To smite him on the mouth*: To stop what he considered his insolence; for so, evidently, the high priest construed his fearless and independent assertion of his innocence.

3. *God shall smite thee*: The expression here denotes what is sure to take place, — a certainty based on Paul's assurance of God's justice. *Thou whited wall*: This refers to the habit of the Jews of painting the outside of their sepulchres white, so warning persons of their presence, in order to prevent defilement. This gave a fair exterior to what was repulsive within, and so the term came to denote a hypocrite. Paul shows, in what follows, the special form of hypocrisy. He was a judge violating the law. *Contrary to the law*: That is, the law against condemning a man unheard. A good deal has been written for and against the Christian character of this utterance of the apostle. It can all be summed up in the statement, that it expressed a righteous indignation, but that there was a good deal of human nature in it.

4. *They that stood by*: The officers of the court, as in verse 2.

5. *I wist not, brethren, that he was the high priest*: This is very singular, as the high priest was the president of the court, *ex-officio*; and his dress and position would point him out. Moreover, Paul's reason for not speaking so to the high priest would apply equally well to the other members of the Sanhedrim; and he must have known that it was some member of the court, for he speaks of his sitting to judge him (verse 3). These considerations absolutely exclude every explanation, except that Paul spoke here ironically; unless, indeed, we suppose that he was speaking under strong excitement, so that we need look for nothing more than a right spirit in what he says, and not for logical coherence. If Paul meant to be ironical, then his "I did not know" resolves itself into "I could not be supposed to know that such a man was high priest;" and the irony is extended to the quotation that follows. But it must be said that this is an extremely improbable supposition in itself, though not impossible, as the rest are. But, if he spoke under excitement, then we may suppose, readily enough, that his attention was called elsewhere, at the time that the high priest spoke, so that he did not know who was speaking; but that, in giving his reason for not using such language, he forgot that it would apply equally well to the other members of the Sanhedrim, while he must have known that it was one of the council who had spoken. *For it is written*: The quotation is from Exod. 22:28.

6. *But when Paul perceived*: But Paul, knowing. He did not perceive it now for the first time, but it was a fact well known to him. *I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee* ("a son of Pharisees," Rev. Ver.): He does not refer to his two parents, as

council, Men and brethren, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee: of the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called in question.

7 And when he had so said, there arose a dissension between the Pharisees and the Sadducees: and the multitude was divided.

8 For the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, neither angel, nor spirit: but the Pharisees confess both.

9 And there arose a great cry: and the scribes *that were* of the Pharisees' part arose, and strove, saying, We find no evil in this man: but if a spirit or an angel hath spoken to him, let us not fight against God.

10 And when there arose a great dissension, the chief captain, fearing lest Paul should have been pulled in pieces of them, commanded the soldiers to go down, and to take him by force from among them, and to bring him into the castle.

sees, he cried out in the council, Brethren, I am a Pharisee, a son of Pharisees: touching the hope and resurrection of the dead I

7 am called in question. And when he had so said, there arose a dissension between the Pharisees and Sadducees: and the

8 assembly was divided. For the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, neither angel, nor spirit: but the Pharisees confess both.

9 And there arose a great clamour: and some of the scribes of the Pharisees' part stood up, and strove, saying, We find no evil in this man: and what if a spirit hath spoken

10 to him, or an angel? And when there arose a great dissension, the chief captain, fearing lest Paul should be torn in pieces by them, commanded the soldiers to go down and take him by force from among them, and bring him into the castle.

his mother's faith would not be considered, but to his father and grandfather, and possibly even to earlier generations. *Of the hope and resurrection:* That is, of the hope of the resurrection. This statement of the apostle, that he was a Pharisee, was partly true, enough so to suit his purpose, and warrant his statement. He was not a defender of traditionalism or ceremonialism, nor a fanatical Jew, on the one side; but he was a Pharisee in his opposition to the indifference, worldliness, and scepticism of the Sadducees. Above all, he was, with the Pharisees, a believer in the future state. He saw, in this relation to one of the two parties before him, an opportunity to divide the assembly, and possibly to put the larger part of the assembly on his side. He knew their temper too well, however, to expect any permanent result, or any thing more than a mere temporary diversion.

8. *No resurrection, neither angel, nor spirit:* That is, neither angel nor any kind of spirit. *The Pharisees confess both:* Both the resurrection and the existence of spirits. These two go together. The Sadducee was a materialist, who believed that the soul was a finer substance than the body, but still matter, and that it would perish therefore with the body. *Confess* is a common word to denote the declaration of a belief.

9. *And the scribes that were of the Pharisees' part:* And some of the scribes of the party of the Pharisees. The scribes, or rabbis, were the natural leaders of the Pharisees, as the priests of the Sadducees. *And strove:* Against the Sadducees. *But if a spirit or an angel hath spoken to him, let us not fight against God* ("and what if a spirit hath spoken to him, or an angel," Rev. Ver.): The implied conclusion is, *What can we do then?* This supposition would account for the supernatural appearances related by Paul, in such a way as to furnish them a weapon against their old enemies, the Sadducees. It was a sly hit at them.

10. *Fearing lest Paul should have been pulled in pieces of them:* In the fierce attempts of the two parties to get possession of him. It would seem as if Lysias must have left Paul without sufficient guard. And now, to remedy that, he sends down the soldiery to protect him. *The castle:* The barracks (see note on 21:37).

11 And the night following the Lord stood by him, and said, Be of good cheer, Paul: for as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome.

11 And the night following the Lord stood by him, and said, Be of good cheer: for as thou hast testified concerning me at Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome.

11. *Be of good cheer, Paul:* Omit *Paul* (Rev. Ver.). The reason given implies that he would escape the present danger, and assures him, too, that he would carry out his favorite plan of preaching the gospel at Rome.

LESSON IX.

PAUL SENT TO FELIX.—Acts 23:12-24.

A GENERAL VIEW.—The Roman government was the great obstacle in the way of Jewish persecution. Under the Jewish law, which made religious offences capital crimes, the way was clear for the dominant party in religion to get rid of religious innovators, like Jesus and Paul; but Palestine was now a province of Rome, and the empire reserved to itself the right of trying all capital offences: hence it was necessary to prove against obnoxious persons some offence against Roman law. Humanly speaking, it would have been impossible for Christianity to have got a foothold in Judæa, except under this *ægis* of the Roman law. This is what made the nefarious plot against Paul, narrated in our lesson, possible. If the Jews had not been a subject people, they could have punished him under the forms of law; but, being unable to do this, they considered themselves justified in resorting to plots, conspiracies, and assassinations, in order to accomplish their religious purposes, and punish blasphemers. They chafed terribly at their inability to guard the purity of religion by civil laws and penalties, and did not scruple in such a juncture to take the law into their own hands. So far as it is a justification, these more than forty Jews are entitled to this explanation, that they were religious enthusiasts, who thought that their holy work made assassination a service of God.

12 And when it was day, certain of the Jews banded together, and bound themselves under a curse, saying that they would neither eat nor drink till they had killed Paul.

13 And they were more than forty which had made this conspiracy.

14 And they came to the chief priests and elders, and said, We have bound ourselves under a great

12 And when it was day, the Jews banded together, and bound themselves under a curse, saying that they would neither eat nor drink till they

13 had killed Paul. And they were more than forty which
14 made this conspiracy. And they came to the chief priests and the elders, and said, We have bound ourselves under a

NOTES.—12. *Certain of the Jews banded together:* Omit *certain of* (Rev. Ver.). Some copyist inserted the words as an explanatory gloss. *Saying that they would neither eat nor drink:* In case they were prevented, without any fault of theirs, from carrying out their oath, they could be absolved from it; but they invoked on themselves the most terrible divine penalties, in case they failed to do what their oath required of them.

13. *This conspiracy:* Literally, this swearing together. The word brings out the fact of the oath which they took together.

14. *The chief priests and the elders:* Probably, though not certainly, the Sadducees alone in the Sanhedrim were concerned in this plot: the Pharisees had taken sides with

curse, that we will eat nothing until we have slain Paul.

15 Now therefore ye with the council signify to the chief captain that he bring him down unto you to-morrow, as though ye would inquire something more perfectly concerning him: and we, or ever he come near, are ready to kill him.

16 And when Paul's sister's son heard of their lying in wait, he went and entered into the castle, and told Paul.

17 Then Paul called one of the centurions unto *him*, and said, Bring this young man unto the chief captain: for he hath a certain thing to tell him.

18 So he took him, and brought *him* to the chief captain, and said, Paul the prisoner called me unto *him*, and prayed me to bring this young man unto thee, who hath something to say unto thee.

19 Then the chief captain took him by the hand, and went *with him* aside privately, and asked *him*, What is that thou hast to tell me?

15 great curse, to taste nothing until we have killed Paul. Now therefore do ye with the council signify to the chief captain that he bring him down unto you, as though ye would judge of his case more exactly: and we, or ever he come near, are 16 ready to slay him. But Paul's sister's son heard of their lying in wait, ¹ and he came and entered into the castle, and told 17 Paul. And Paul called unto him one of the centurions, and said, Bring this young man unto the chief captain: for he hath 18 something to tell him. So he took him, and brought him to the chief captain, and saith, Paul the prisoner called me unto him, and asked me to bring this young man unto thee, who hath something to say to thee. 19 And the chief captain took him by the hand, and going aside asked him privately, What is 20 that thou hast to tell me? And he said, The Jews have agreed

¹ Or, having come in upon them, and he entered, etc.

Paul only the day before. It is in accordance with this, that the scribes are not mentioned, as they would belong principally to the Pharisees. But it is by no means certain that the Pharisees could be diverted from their intense hostility to the renegade Paul for even so long a time as this; and, moreover, this whole proceeding has the Pharisaic fierceness and fanaticism about it. The chief priests were the heads of the twenty-four courses into which the priesthood was divided for the performance of its duties.

15. *Now therefore ye with the council signify*: *Ye* is emphatic, indicating their part in the scheme, over against that of the conspirators. *With the council* indicates that only a part of the Sanhedrim were approached, but that the conspirators wished these to associate with them the whole body, making it their act. *Unto you to-morrow*: *To-morrow* is to be omitted (Rev. Ver.). *As though ye would inquire something more perfectly concerning him* ("as though ye would judge of his case more exactly," Rev. Ver.): The verb means to make a judicial inquiry or investigation. *Or ever he come near*: Before he has come near; i.e., to the place of assembly. Their purpose was to kill him on the way.

16. *And when Paul's sister's son heard*: And Paul's sister's son having heard. The participle may be rendered by a temporal clause, but it denotes here something more than the time of the event. Whether this young man's family was resident at Jerusalem, and whether he or they were Christians, are matters of conjecture. *Entered into the castle, and told Paul*: As Paul was in prison awaiting the decision of the question whether there was any charge against him that would make him amenable to Roman law, and rather to keep him from the violence of his countrymen than any thing else, he would not be kept, probably, in very rigorous imprisonment; and his friends were permitted to see him.

19. *Took him by the hand*: The young man was probably quite young and timid,

20 And he said, The Jews have agreed to desire thee that thou wouldest bring down Paul to-morrow into the council, as though they would inquire somewhat of him more perfectly.

21 But do not thou yield unto them: for there lie in wait for him of them more than forty men, which have bound themselves with an oath, that they will neither eat nor drink till they have killed him: and now are they ready, looking for a promise from thee.

22 So the chief captain *then* let the young man depart, and charged *him*, *See thou tell no man that thou hast showed these things to me.*

23 And he called unto *him* two centurions, saying, Make ready two hundred soldiers to go to Cæsarea, and horsemen threescore and ten, and spearmen two hundred, at the third hour of the night;

24 And provide *them* beasts, that

to ask thee to bring down Paul to-morrow unto the council, as though thou wouldest inquire somewhat more exactly concerning him. Do not thou therefore yield unto them: for there lie in wait for him of them more than forty men, which have bound themselves under a curse, neither to eat nor to drink till they have slain him: and now are they ready, looking for the promise from thee. So the chief captain let the young man go, charging him, Tell no man that thou hast signified these things to me. And he called unto him two of the centurions, and said, Make ready two hundred soldiers to go as far as Cæsarea, and horsemen threescore and ten, and spearmen two hundred, at the third hour of the night: and *he bade them* provide beasts, that they might set Paul

and Lysias wished to re-assure him. It was evidently a matter of secrecy and importance that he wished to communicate, and so Lysias took him aside.

20. *As though they would inquire somewhat of him more perfectly* ("as though thou wouldest inquire somewhat more exactly concerning him," Rev. Ver.): Paul was brought before the Sanhedrim originally by the commander of the garrison, in order that he might find out through their examination what the charge against him was. As that examination had been interrupted, the pretext for this was the commander's desire to prosecute the inquiry farther.

21. *But do not thou* ("Do not thou therefore," Rev. Ver.). *With an oath* ("with a curse," Rev. Ver.): They invoked a curse on themselves if they did not fulfil their oath. *Looking for a promise from thee* ("the promise," Rev. Ver.).

23. *And he called unto him two centurions*: Some two of the centurions. The number is left indefinite by this expression, — two or three of them. It was a large force that he was sending, and needed to be adequately commanded. *Two hundred soldiers*: The ordinary heavily armed foot-soldier is meant. *To go to Cæsarea*: Cæsarea was the residence of the Roman governors of Judæa. It was a magnificent city, built by Herod the Great, and situated about seventy miles north-west of Jerusalem, on the coast. In reality, this part of the force went only to Antipatris, about two-thirds of the distance to Cæsarea. *Spearmen two hundred*: The word translated *spearmen* is very rare, and there is no definite indication of its meaning. Probably it denotes some kind of light-armed troops; not spearmen, as the spear was a heavy arm. *The third hour of the night*: Nine o'clock.

24. *And provide them beasts* ("And *he bade them* provide beasts," Rev. Ver.): More than one; in order to have one in reserve, in case of accident or fatigue. *And bring him safe*: The word is such as to lay stress on the safety; for this was a turbulent period in Judæa, and evidently Paul was especially obnoxious to the Jews. *Felix the governor*: The proper name of the governor of Judæa was *procurator*. The country was really a part of the province of Syria; but, owing to the fact that the Jews were so distinct a people, they were ruled by a procurator, as a separate, but subordinate, district. Titus Numidius Quadratus was legate of Syria at this time, and Claudius (or

they may set Paul on, and bring *him* safe unto Felix the governor. | thereon, and bring him safe unto Felix the governor.

Antonius) Felix was procurator of Judæa. The rule of Felix was not only stern and rigorous, as the turbulent state of the country demanded, but "mean, cruel, and profligate." He was procurator from A.D. 53 to 60.

LESSON X.

PAUL BEFORE FELIX.—Acts 24:10-27.

A GENERAL VIEW.—Lysias, in sending his prisoner to Felix, represented that he had rescued him from the Jews, and had found, after examination, that he was accused of nothing that would make him amenable to Roman law. He had sent him to Felix because of the plot of the Jews against him, and would send his accusers after him. In accordance with this, Ananias, the high priest, and the elders had come down to Cæsarea with Tertullus, a professional advocate, and presented their case against Paul. Tertullus had made three charges against him: first, of stirring up dissension among the Jews throughout the world; secondly, of being a leader of the sect of the Nazarenes; and, thirdly, of polluting the temple. He tries to make it appear, that, in accordance with the nature of these offences, Paul was about to be tried by the Jews under their law, but had been taken from them violently by the commander of the garrison. Apparently, the object was to persuade Felix to deliver him over to the Jews again for trial; an attempt which they repeated when Festus came into office. Paul, in his reply, denies, first, the charge of making any disturbance in the temple, the synagogue, or the city, during his stay in Jerusalem, to which he properly confines his defence. Secondly, he shows that Christianity is not a departure from the Jewish religion sanctioned by Roman law, but is conformed to the Jewish Scriptures; and that he himself is a conscientious observer of it. Thirdly, he comes to the immediate occasion of the tumult against him, and alleges that he came to Jerusalem for the peaceful purpose of bringing gifts to his nation, and temple-offerings for himself; and that, in pursuance of this object, he had been found in the temple; but not polluting it, nor creating any disturbance. And, finally, he challenges his accusers to bring proof of their charges.

10 Then Paul, after that the governor had beckoned unto him to speak, answered, Forasmuch as I know that thou hast been of many years a judge unto this nation, I do the more cheerfully answer for myself:

11 Because that thou mayest understand, that there are yet but twelve days since I went up to Jerusalem for to worship.

10 And when the governor had beckoned unto him to speak, Paul answered,

Forasmuch as I know that thou hast been of many years a judge unto this nation, I do cheerfully

11 make my defence: seeing that thou canst take knowledge, that it is not more than twelve days since I went up to worship at 12 Jerusalem: and neither in the

NOTES.—10. *Many years a judge*: Five years. He became procurator in A.D. 53, and it was now A.D. 58. *I do the more cheerfully answer for myself* ("I do cheerfully make my defence," Rev. Ver.): He considers that his long service in the country would make the procurator familiar with its customs, and especially with the matters at issue between Christians and Jews, so that he would not be misled easily by false statements.

11. *Because that thou mayest understand* ("seeing that thou canst take knowledge," Rev. Ver.): The idea is, that Felix, owing to his acquaintance with the

12 And they neither found me in the temple disputing with any man, neither raising up the people, neither in the synagogues, nor in the city:

13 Neither can they prove the things whereof they now accuse me.

14 But this I confess unto thee, that after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and in the prophets:

15 And have hope toward God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust.

16 And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men.

temple did they find me disputing with any man or stirring up a crowd, nor in the synagogues, nor in the city. Neither can they prove to thee the things whereof they now accuse me.

14 But this I confess unto thee, that after the Way which they call ¹a sect, so serve I the God of our fathers, believing all things which are according to the law, and which are written

15 in the prophets: having hope toward God, which these also themselves ²look for, that there shall be a resurrection both of

16 the just and unjust. Herein do I also exercise myself to have a conscience void of offence toward God and men alway.

17 Now after ³many years I came

¹ Or, *heresy*. ² Or, *accept*. ³ Or, *some*.

country, can easily find out the truth of what Paul asserts, not only of the time since Paul went up to Jerusalem, but of the other things that follow. *Twelve days*: These are reckoned as follows: first, the day of his arrival (21: 17); second, the day of his interview with James (21: 18); third, the day when he took the vow (21: 26); fourth, fifth, sixth, and seventh, the days after the assumption of the vow, and before the attack on him; eighth, the day of his examination before the Sanhedrim (22: 30-23: 10); ninth, the day on which the plot against him was formed, and of the night march to Antipatris (23: 12-31); and tenth to thirteenth, the days at Cæsarea (24: 1). The five days in this last passage are reckoned from Paul's departure from Jerusalem. *To worship*: To take part in the feast of Pentecost. See 20: 16.

12. *Neither raising up the people* ("or stirring up a crowd," Rev. Ver.): This is an answer to the first charge made against him, that he was a disturber of the peace (verse 5).

13. Paul makes his own statement first, and then calls on them to prove theirs.

14. *After the way which they call heresy* ("which they call a sect," Rev. Ver.): The word denotes a school of thought; any party advocating a set of principles in religion or philosophy (see Acts 5: 17; 15: 5; 26: 5; 28: 22). Tertullus had used the word in an invidious sense, to denote a schismatic party,—a faction. *So worship I the God of my fathers* ("the God of our fathers," Rev. Ver.): Paul wishes to identify himself with the ancestral, national worship, and so to repel the charge of being the leader of a schismatic party (see 24: 5, last clause). *Which are written in the law and in the prophets* ("which are according to the law, and which are written in the prophets," Rev. Ver.): His position in this so-called sect does not prevent his acceptance of the religious law, or scriptures, of the nation in full.

15. *Which they themselves also allow* ("which these also themselves look for," Rev. Ver.): The thing looked for is this hope of the resurrection. He has the common hope, as well as the same God and the same law. Paul's allusion to his accusers here would indicate that now, at least, the temporary espousal of his cause by the Pharisees was at an end, and that those present were principally of this party.

16. *And herein*: Herein do I also. Paul not only has this hope, but, because of it, he trains or exercises himself to have a good conscience. Since the resurrection is of the just and unjust, it contemplates a future state of rewards and punishments; and the apostle is moved by it, therefore, to a constant practice of righteousness.

17 Now after many years I came to bring alms to my nation, and offerings.

18 Whereupon certain Jews from Asia found me purified in the temple, neither with multitude, nor with tumult.

19 Who ought to have been here before thee, and object, if they had aught against me.

20 Or else let these same *here* say, if they have found any evil doing in me, while I stood before the council,

21 Except it be for this one voice, that I cried standing among them, Touching the resurrection of the dead I am called in question by you this day.

22 And when Felix heard these things, having more perfect knowledge of *that way*, he deferred them, and said, When Lysias the chief captain shall come down, I will know the uttermost of your matter.

18 to bring alms to my nation, and offerings: ¹ amidst which they found me purified in the temple, with no crowd, nor yet with tumult: but *there were* certain 19 Jews from Asia—who ought to have been here before thee, and to make accusation, if they had 20 aught against me. Or else let these men themselves say what wrong-doing they found, when I 21 stood before the council, except it be for this one voice, that I cried standing among them, Touching the resurrection of the dead I am called in question before you this day.

22 But Felix, having more exact knowledge concerning the Way, deferred them, saying, When Lysias the chief captain shall come down, I will determine 23 your matter. And he gave order to the centurion that he should be kept in charge, and should

¹ Or, in presenting *which*.

17. *After many years*: After several years. It was four years since Paul's last visit to Jerusalem. *To bring alms to my nation*: Referring to the contributions which he collected from his Gentile churches for the church at Jerusalem. *And offerings*: This refers to his own personal offerings in the temple, connected with his Nazarite vow. He speaks here as if this was included in the purpose of his coming, instead of merely its results.

18. *Whereupon* ("amidst which," Rev. Ver.): In the course of the offerings mentioned *Certain Jews from Asia found me* ("they found me . . . with no crowd, nor yet with tumult: but *there were* certain Jews from Asia," Rev. Ver.): This last statement the apostle leaves unfinished, breaking it off abruptly. His idea is, "Well, they could tell you, if they were here, as they ought to be." *Purified in the temple*: Not polluting it, therefore, as had been alleged. The reference is to the ceremonial purification accompanying his Nazarite vow.

19. *And object* ("and to make accusation," Rev. Ver.): These Asiatic Jews were the ones who had stirred up the people against him, on the charge of polluting the temple, out of which the whole trouble had arisen; and, if the Sanhedrim had had any idea of judicial proceedings against him, they would have produced these witnesses.

20. *Or else let these same here say*: The members of the Sanhedrim. They have made general charges, and Paul points out the witnesses who could prove any thing specific under these charges, if there was any thing in them.

22. *And when Felix heard these things, having more perfect knowledge of that way* ("and Felix, having more perfect knowledge of the Way," Rev. Ver.): That is, more perfect than the Sanhedrists had given in their representation. They had represented it as a turbulent, factious departure from the Jewish religion, seeking its overthrow. Felix, from his long residence, knew better: so he was not prepared to take their statements, and deferred the matter. At the same time, he was careful not to offend the Jews by releasing Paul. *I will know the uttermost of your matter*: I will investigate your matter. It is a word used in the New Testament, of a judicial investigation.

23 And he commanded a centurion to keep Paul, and to let *him* have liberty, and that he should forbid none of his acquaintance to minister or come unto him.

24 And after certain days, when Felix came with his wife Drusilla, which was a Jewess, he sent for Paul, and heard him concerning the faith in Christ.

25 And as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled, and answered, Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee.

26 He hoped also that money should have been given him of Paul, that he might loose him; wherefore he sent for him the oftener, and communed with him.

27 But after two years Porcius Festus came into Felix' room: and Felix, willing to show the Jews a pleasure, left Paul bound.

have indulgence; and not to forbid any of his friends to minister unto him.

24 But after certain days, Felix came with Drusilla, ¹ his wife, which was a Jewess, and sent for Paul, and heard him concerning the faith in Christ Jesus.

25 And as he reasoned of righteousness, and ¹temperance, and the judgement to come, Felix was terrified, and answered, Go thy way for this time; and when I have a convenient season, I will

26 call thee unto me. He hoped withal that money would be given him of Paul: wherefore also he sent for him the oftener,

27 and communed with him. But when two years were fulfilled, Felix was succeeded by Porcius Festus; and desiring to gain favor with the Jews, Felix left Paul in bonds.

¹ Gr. *his own wife*.

23. *And he commanded a centurion* ("the centurion," Rev. Ver.): The one, that is, who had Paul in charge before this examination. *To let him have liberty*: *Liberty* is too strong a word to use here. The idea is, that the officer should relax somewhat the rigor of his confinement. *Or come unto*: Omit (Rev. Ver.).

24. *His wife Drusilla*: A daughter of Herod Agrippa I. (see 12:1 *sq.*), and a sister of Herod Agrippa II. (see 25:13). She had been betrothed to Antiochus Epiphanes, prince of Commagene; but, as he refused to be circumcised, she had married King Azizus of Emesa. But a short time after this marriage, Felix, being captivated by her beauty, persuaded her to desert her husband, and to live with him. This was really an adulterous connection, though she lived with him as his wife. Felix probably summoned Paul to this conference, in order to satisfy the curiosity of his wife about this leader of the new sect.

25. *Of righteousness*: Felix was a notoriously unjust ruler, according to the testimony of all writers, whose favor at court alone kept him in office. *And temperance*: *Continence*, or *self-control*, renders the word better. Here, again, Paul selected a subject to arouse the guilty conscience of his hearer; as Felix was a notorious profligate, and one of the partners of his guilt was sitting there with him. *And judgment to come* ("the judgement to come," Rev. Ver.): It was the "eat and drink, for to-morrow we die" doctrine that made wicked men live at ease. *Felix trembled* ("was terrified," Rev. Ver.).

26. *That he might loose him*: Omit (Rev. Ver.). But of course, though this is not in the text, it is the object for which he expected the money to be given him. This bribery became common in the empire; and Albinus, who succeeded Festus in the procuratorship of Judæa, made liberty a matter of purchase for all criminals. Felix very likely knew that Paul was poor, but calculated on the value to the Christian community of such a man.

27. *Porcius Festus came into Felix' room* ("Felix was succeeded by Porcius Festus," Rev. Ver.). *Willing to show the Jews a pleasure* ("desiring to gain favor with the Jews," Rev. Ver.): He had been an unjust and harsh ruler, and the Jews could make trouble for him at court. This, in fact, they actually did; and he saved himself only through the intervention of Pallas his brother, the emperor's freedman.

LESSON XI.

PAUL BEFORE AGRIPPA.—Acts 26:1-18.

A GENERAL VIEW.—After Festus became procurator of Judæa, one of the first things that he did was to go up to Jerusalem, the real capital of the province, though Cæsarea had become the residence of the Roman governor. While there, the Jews repeated their attempt to have Paul brought up to Jerusalem for trial, intending to waylay and kill him; but Festus decided that he should be tried before himself at Cæsarea, and that the Jews should appear before him there with their charges. After this trial, however, he made a proposition to Paul, that he should be tried at Jerusalem, by the Sanhedrim, in his presence; and Paul, fearing the result of this evident desire on the part of Festus to please the Jews, appealed to Cæsar. Then, after some time, Agrippa, the king of the country lying east of Samaria, came with his sister Bernice, with whom he was living in an incestuous connection, to make a visit to Festus; and the procurator laid Paul's case before him for his advice. He represented to Agrippa the eagerness of the Jews to obtain judgment against Paul, and his own failure to find any charge against him of which the Roman law would take account. Then he told how Paul had appealed to Cæsar, and the addition that this made to his perplexity, as he had nothing certain to write to the emperor about the case. So it came about that Agrippa asked to hear from Paul himself what he had to say.

1 Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Thou art permitted to speak for thyself. Then Paul stretched forth the hand, and answered for himself:

2 I think myself happy, king Agrippa, because I shall answer for myself this day before thee touching all the things whereof I am accused of the Jews:

3 Especially, because I know thee to be expert in all customs and questions which are among the Jews: wherefore I beseech thee to hear me patiently.

4 My manner of life from my

1 And Agrippa said unto Paul, Thou art permitted to speak for thyself. Then Paul stretched forth his hand, and made his defence:

2 I think myself happy, king Agrippa, that I am to make my defence before thee this day touching all the things whereof

3 I am accused by the Jews: especially because thou art expert in all customs and questions which are among the Jews: wherefore I beseech thee to hear

4 me patiently. My manner of

¹ Or, because thou art especially expert.

NOTES.—1. *Agrippa said unto Paul:* Of course Festus was the only one who had any authority in this matter; Agrippa took the lead merely as a matter of courtesy. *And answered for himself* (“and made his defence,” Rev. Ver.).

2. *Because I shall answer for myself* (“that I am to make my defence,” Rev. Ver.). *King Agrippa:* Herod Agrippa II. a great-grandson of Herod the Great, and son of the Herod mentioned in Acts 12. His youth prevented his accession to his father's place as the ruler of Palestine; but afterwards he was appointed, first to the little kingdom of Chalcis, near Antioch in Syria, and then to the tetrarchies of Batanea, Trachonitis, Auranitis, and part of Jamnia, lying east of Galilee on the other side of the Jordan, with the title of king.

3. *Especially, because I know thee to be expert* (“because thou art expert,” Rev. Ver.): Or, acquainted with; *expert* is a little too strong a word. *And questions:* Those that divided the sects, such as Pharisees and Sadducees, from each other. Agrippa's knowledge of these things arose from the fact that the Herodian family had been for generations rulers of the Jews, and themselves were professed Jews.

youth, which was at the first among mine own nation at Jerusalem, know all the Jews;

5 Which knew me from the beginning, if they would testify, that after the most straitest sect of our religion I lived a Pharisee.

6 And now I stand and am judged for the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers:

7 Unto which *promise* our twelve tribes, instantly serving *God* day and night, hope to come. For which hope's sake, king Agrippa, I am accused of the Jews.

8 Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead?

life then from my youth up, which was from the beginning among mine own nation, and at Jerusalem, know all the Jews; 5 having knowledge of me from the first, if they be willing to testify, how that after the straitest sect of our religion I lived a 6 Pharisee. And now I stand here to be judged for the hope of the promise made of God 7 unto our fathers; unto which *promise* our twelve tribes, earnestly serving *God* night and day, hope to attain. And concerning this hope I am accused 8 by the Jews, O king! Why is it judged incredible with you, if

4. *Which was at the first* ("from the beginning," Rev. Ver.). *At Jerusalem* ("and at Jerusalem," Rev. Ver.): This is added as a more specific designation of the place where he had passed his life. It had been not only among the Jews, but in their capital city; so that the statements that he makes can be amply proved. *Know all the Jews*: His life had been an active and public life, so that he was a well-known character.

5. *Which knew me from the beginning*: Having previous knowledge of me from the beginning. Their knowledge of him had not begun, as might be supposed, with these events, but dated back to the time when he was a zealous and noted Pharisee. *After the straitest sect of our religion*: The strictest, most precise sect (see the description of the Pharisees in Lesson VIII.). They were noted for their zeal and punctiliousness in the observance of every thing relating to the forms of religion. The word for *religion* denotes the worship of God. *If they would testify*: If they are willing to testify. Paul doubts their willingness, because this fact strengthens his witness to Christianity. This is the first point in Paul's defence. The charge was, that he created dissensions among the Jews, and disregarded and defiled their sacred things. Paul's first statement in reply is, that he was from the beginning a strict Jew, as all his accusers could testify.

6. *And now*: Emphatic. There is no real break in his life. He had been a precise Jew; and now it is for nothing anti-Jewish that he is called to account, but for entertaining the national hope. The promise is evidently the Messianic promise, not that of the resurrection; since Paul would scarcely claim, in regard to that, that it was made by God unto the fathers, nor that it was looked for by all the nation.

7. *Our twelve tribes*: Only two tribes, as such, returned from the captivity. But, then, not all of any of the tribes went into captivity; and every Jew considered himself as not only a member of his own tribe, but of the nation of the twelve tribes. *Instantly serving* ("earnestly," Rev. Ver.). *Hope to come* ("hope to attain," Rev. Ver.): Here was the difference between the nation at large and Paul. They were still expecting: he saw the promise already fulfilled. *For which hope's sake*: Concerning which hope. The Revised Version puts an exclamation mark after this statement; and probably Paul meant to note it as a surprising thing, that he should be accused on that ground. This, then, is the second point in Paul's reply,—that, so far from being an opposer of the Jews' religion, the accusation against him was, that he shared the national hope and expectation.

8. *Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead?* ("Why is it judged incredible with you, if God doth raise the dead?" Rev. Ver.) The connection of this with the preceding is this: Paul recognized the fact, that, in Agrippa's mind, what he has said about the general Messianic

9 I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth.

10 Which thing I also did in Jerusalem: and many of the saints did I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; and when they were put to death, I gave my voice against them.

11 And I punished them oft in every synagogue, and compelled them to blaspheme; and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them even unto strange cities.

12 Whereupon as I went to Damascus with authority and commission from the chief priests,

13 At midday, O king, I saw in the way a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun, shining round about me and them which journeyed with me.

9 God doth raise the dead? I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of

10 Nazareth. And this I also did in Jerusalem: and I both shut up many of the saints in prisons, having received authority from the chief priests, and when they were put to death, I gave my
11 vote against them. And punishing them oftentimes in all the synagogues, I strove to make them blaspheme; and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them even unto for-

12 eign cities. ¹ Whereupon as I journeyed to Damascus with the authority and commission of the

13 chief priests, at midday, O king, I saw on the way a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun, shining round about me and them that journeyed with

¹ Or, *On which errand.*

hope would instantly connect itself with Paul's specific belief in Jesus as the Messiah; and that the transition from this to the fact of the resurrection of Jesus, which Paul preached as the great proof of the Messianic claim of Jesus, would be easy. His mind, therefore, jumps the intermediate steps, and comes immediately to this. *With you:* Paul addresses himself here to the Jewish nation represented in Agrippa, the Jewish king. He is speaking here of the actual unbelief of the Jews in the resurrection of Jesus. The general fact of the resurrection, to which this specific event belonged, was not disbelieved by most of them; and yet they refused to believe particular cases under it.

9. *I verily thought with myself:* For this reason I thought with myself; i.e., on account of this unbelief of which he has spoken. Paul shows here how he was once a victim of the same unbelief, and how he was brought to a better mind. *Jesus of Nazareth:* This was the name of contempt that the Jews applied to Jesus (see John 1: 46). Paul is speaking here from the stand-point of Saul of Tarsus.

10. *Having received authority from the chief priests:* In 9: 2, it is said that Paul had his authority from the high priests; and in 22: 5, from the eldership. They are all only different modes of designating the Sanhedrim, according to the different bodies composing it. *I gave my voice against them:* Literally, my vote; and some have inferred from this that Paul was a member of the Sanhedrim. But there are good examples of the figurative use of the words, in the sense of *to give an opinion*; and Paul's age, and probably, also, his being an unmarried man, would have been a bar to his membership.

11. *And I punished them, . . . and compelled them to blaspheme* ("And punishing them, . . . I strove to make them blaspheme," Rev. Ver.): He sought by punishment and torture to extract from them a denial of the Lord. This was done in the synagogues, as being the local tribunals (see Matt. 10: 17; 23: 34). *Exceedingly mad:* In the sense of furious, raving; a very strong expression of his uncontrollable rage. *Strange cities:* Outside of Palestine. ("Foreign cities," Rev. Ver.)

13. *At midday . . . above the brightness of the sun:* The two combined make *above the brightness of the midday sun*.

14 And when we were all fallen to the earth, I heard a voice speaking unto me, and saying in the Hebrew tongue, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? *it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.*

15 And I said, Who art thou, Lord? And he said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest.

16 But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee;

17 Delivering thee from the people, and *from* the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee,

18 To open their eyes, *and* to turn *them* from darkness to light, and *from* the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.

14 me. And when we were all fallen to the earth, I heard a voice saying unto me in the Hebrew language, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? it is hard for thee to kick against ¹the goad. And I said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest. But arise, and stand upon thy feet: for to this end have I appeared unto thee, to appoint thee a minister and a witness both of the things ²wherein thou hast seen me, and of the things wherein I will appear unto thee; delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom I send thee, to open their eyes, ³that they may turn from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive remission of sins and an inheritance among them that are sanctified by faith in me.

¹ Gr. *goads.* ² Many ancient authorities read *which thou hast seen.* ³ Or, *to turn them.*

14. *When we were all fallen to the earth:* In chapter 9: 7 it is said that those journeying with him "stood speechless." It is an unimportant difference in any case; and possibly the statement in chapter 9 means only that they were rooted to the spot, and does not preclude the statement that they fell to the ground. *In the Hebrew tongue:* Strictly speaking, Hebrew was not spoken at this time, being a dead language, but Aramaic. *It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks:* Against the goads. The person who held the one handle of the plough in one hand carried in the other a long goad, with which he urged the oxen. A refractory beast kicking against this punishment would only drive the sharp iron tip of the goad deeper in. The idea is, that Paul is resisting the inevitable, and will find it hard work; simply procuring punishment for himself.

16. In the account given in chapters 9 and 22, these instructions are given to Paul by Ananias, and not by Jesus, who simply directs Paul to go into the city, where he will be told what to do. This is a condensed account.

17. *From the people, and from the Gentiles:* The people is the Jewish people.

18. *To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness* ("that they may turn," Rev. Ver.): It denotes the object of opening their eyes. *Inheritance among them which are sanctified* (see 20: 32; Eph. 1: 18). *By faith that is in me:* Omit *that is* (Rev. Ver.). Probably these words limit the verb *receive*, as faith is generally made the means of obtaining these things; but, as their reception of them is also made here to depend on their turning from Satan unto God, it shows what the faith is which procures forgiveness, and what it must first do for the man. The third point in the apostle's defence is, that his present position is not only a Jewish position, but that the difference between him and other Jews is due to divine revelation.

LESSON XII.

PAUL VINDICATED.—Acts 26:19-32.

A GENERAL VIEW.—Paul continues his discourse by showing that what he had done, since his conversion, was due to the revelation made to him, and, further, by the statement that the things which he preached were contained in the Jewish Scriptures. Then, being interrupted by Festus, he appeals to Agrippa for the truth of his statements, and even begins a more personal appeal to him, which Agrippa turns aside with a sarcasm. This appeal is due to the fact that Agrippa was a professed Jew, and therefore supposed to be acquainted with the facts of Christ's work, and with the prophetic writings to which Paul refers.

19 Whereupon, O king Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision:

20 But showed first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judæa, and *then* to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance.

21 For these causes the Jews caught me in the temple, and went about to kill me.

22 Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come:

19 Wherefore, O king Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the

20 heavenly vision: but declared both to them of Damascus first, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the country of Judæa, and also to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, doing works worthy of ¹repentance.

21 For this cause the Jews seized me in the temple, and assayed to

22 kill me. Having therefore obtained the help that is from God, I stand unto this day testifying both to small and great, saying nothing but what the prophets and Moses did say should come;

23 ²how that the Christ ³must suf-

¹ Or, *their* repentance. ² Or, *if*. Or, *whether*. ³ Or, *is subject to suffering*.

NOTES.—19. *Whereupon* ("wherefore," Rev. Ver.).

20. *Showed* ("declared," Rev. Ver.): Strictly it means, *I brought the message*. *Coasts* ("country," Rev. Ver.). *And do* ("doing," Rev. Ver.). *Repent—repentance*: These words do not mean, in the original, *sorrow for sin*, as the English words do. That is only implied, as a part of the idea. The meaning of the word is, a change of mind. There are three things contained in it. First, the change which Christianity demands is in view of the fact that man is a sinner. It requires, therefore, a change from sin to righteousness. Secondly, this change, as denoted by the word, is primarily an inward change of the sentiments and affections. And, thirdly, it is a change effected by the new truth, the changed view of things that Christianity brings to men. The word is, in a way, an epitome of Christianity. *Works meet for repentance* ("worthy of repentance," Rev. Ver.): Worthy of this complete and radical change.

21. *For these causes*: Emphatic. This is the reason, he says, of my persecution. After exhibiting the lofty and pure spiritual doctrine that he was commissioned to preach, and did preach, he says, "It was for this that I was persecuted."

22. *Having therefore obtained help of God*: This help from God is an inference from the preceding statement in regard to his persecution, as without this help it would have been impossible to "continue unto this day." *Witnessing both to small and great*: Not fearing to address the one, and not despising to address the others. *Saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses*: This

23 That Christ should suffer, *and* that he should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should shew light unto the people, and to the Gentiles.

24 And as he thus spake for himself, Festus said with a loud voice, Paul, thou art beside thyself; much learning doth make thee mad.

25 But he said, I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak forth the words of truth and soberness.

26 For the king knoweth of these things, before whom also I speak freely: for I am persuaded that none of these things are hidden from him; for this thing was not done in a corner.

fer, *and*¹ how that he first by the resurrection of the dead should proclaim light both to the people and to the Gentiles.

24 And as he thus made his defence, Festus saith with a loud voice, Paul, thou art mad; thy much learning doth turn thee to

25 madness. But Paul saith, I am not mad, most excellent Festus; but speak forth words of truth

26 and soberness. For the king knoweth of these things, unto whom also I speak freely: for I am persuaded that none of these things is hidden from him; for this hath not been done in a corner. King Agrippa, believest

¹ Or, *if*. Or, *whether*.

makes another point in his defence,—that he taught, in his preaching, only what the prophetic Scriptures warranted.

23. *That Christ should suffer, and that, etc.*: If the Messiah is liable to suffering; if he, as first to rise from the dead, is to proclaim light both to the people and to the Gentiles. That is, what Paul said was in the nature of a discussion of these questions, in which, however, he confined himself to what the Scriptures said. The first question so discussed was, whether the Messiah is liable to suffering; i.e., whether the Scriptures predict such suffering, and describe his work in such a way as to involve suffering. The second was, whether the Messiah, by virtue of his being the first-fruits of the resurrection, should proclaim light to the people and the Gentiles. The emphasis comes on the question whether the credentials of his position and work were to be the resurrection, or something belonging to the Jewish notion of a temporal Messiah. And a secondary part of the question is the inclusion of the Gentiles in that work.

24. *Spake for himself* ("made his defence," Rev. Ver.). *Thou art beside thyself; much learning doth make thee mad* ("Thou art mad; thy much learning doth turn thee to madness," Rev. Ver.): The cause of Felix's interruption was probably the mention of the resurrection for the second time. The attitude of cultivated Gentiles, at this time, towards the supernatural was decidedly sceptical; and this matter of the resurrection excited their special ridicule. The *loud voice* was probably due to his impatience in listening to the whole tissue of rhapsodies and dreams, of which it seemed to him Paul's defence had consisted; and, when this culminated in the statement about the resurrection, his impatience burst forth. His attributing Paul's madness to his learning was not occasioned, probably, by the learned quality of his speech, but by what he had heard of Paul's reputation for learning.

25. *Most noble Festus*: This was a form used in addressing persons of rank. *The words of truth and soberness*: Omit the article (Rev. Ver.). The *soberness* is opposed directly to the *madness* of verse 24. The *truth* of his words is just as much opposed to it, but not so directly.

26. *For the king knoweth of these things*: That is, of the death and resurrection of Christ. *Before whom also I speak freely*: That is, without any reserve, as if he feared to be convicted of error or exaggeration in his statements. *For this thing was not done in a corner*: The facts in regard to Christ's life, while they attracted little attention outside of Palestine, were matters of general notoriety among the Jews.

27 King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets? I know that thou believest.

28 Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian.

29 And Paul said, I would to God, that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost, and altogether such as I am, except these bonds.

30 And when he had thus spoken, the king rose up, and the governor, and Bernice, and they that sat with them:

31 And when they were gone aside, they talked between themselves, saying, This man doeth nothing worthy of death or of bonds.

32 Then said Agrippa unto Festus, This man might have been set at liberty, if he had not appealed unto Cæsar.

28 thou the prophets? I know that thou believest. And Agrippa said unto Paul, With but little persuasion thou wouldest fain make me a Christian. And Paul said, I would to God, that whether with little or with much, not thou only, but also all that hear me this day, might become such as I am, except these bonds.

30 And the king rose up, and the governor, and Bernice, and they that sat with them: and when they had withdrawn, they spake one to another, saying, This man doeth nothing worthy of death or of bonds. And Agrippa said unto Festus, This man might have been set at liberty, if he had not appealed unto Cæsar.

27. *King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets?* Paul appeals to Agrippa, not only for the truth of what he says about the facts of Christ's life, but also for the correctness of his citation of the prophets. But, in regard to both of these, he does not expect the king to confirm absolutely the truth of his statement, but only to testify that a man might easily believe as Paul did, and still be in his sober senses. The second of these appeals he puts in the form of a question, as he wishes to press the truth of Christianity on him personally.

28. *Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian:* With little trouble thou persuadest. Agrippa sees Paul's purpose, and turns it aside with a piece of irony.

29. *Both almost and altogether* ("Whether with little or with much," Rev. Ver.): We have the same expression here that is translated *almost* in verse 28; and, while it was quite impossible to render it so there, it is doubly so in this verse. *Except these bonds:* Paul was not attended, probably, by the soldier who guarded him; but apparently he wore the chain still fastened to his wrist.

30. *When he had thus spoken:* Omit (Rev. Ver.). *The governor:* See note on 23: 24, Lesson IX. *Bernice:* The daughter of Herod Agrippa I., and sister of this Agrippa. She had been married to her uncle, the king of Chalcis; but after his death she came to live with her brother, with whom, probably, she formed an incestuous connection. This was interrupted, but only for a short time, by a second marriage with Polemon, king of Cilicia. She afterwards became the mistress of the Emperor Vespasian, and of his son Titus. This sudden closing of the conference was due, probably, to the personal character that Paul had given to it. They were willing to listen to his defence, but no further.

31. *This man doeth nothing worthy of death or of bonds:* They saw that his offence was not such as made him amenable to Roman law; and, moreover, he must have made on them the impression of an innocent and genuine kind of man.

32. *If he had not appealed unto Cæsar:* This was something from which he could not draw back. It made it necessary that he should go to Rome.

SECOND QUARTER.

LESSON I.

PAUL'S VOYAGE.—Acts 27:1, 2, 14-26.

A GENERAL VIEW.

THIS voyage of Paul, of which we study a part in this lesson, is interesting, because it gives a fine impression of Paul's character, on the one hand, and because the minuteness of the account, and the nautical terms employed, give an excellent opportunity to test its correctness. The voyage was to be from Cæsarea to Italy; and for this purpose, as no ship was to be found going there directly, they embarked in a vessel belonging to Adramyttium in Asia Minor, and sailed for the coast of Asia, expecting to find at some of the ports at which they touched a vessel bound for Italy. This vessel went along the Syrian coast as far as Sidon, and then put out to sea; but, as the wind was blowing from the west, they sailed to the north of Cyprus, instead of the south, which was the direct route from Palestine to Asia Minor. Then sailing along the coast of Cilicia and Pamphylia, they came to Myra in Lycia. Here they found a vessel of Alexandria, bound for Italy. Embarking in this, they worked along the coast to Cnidus, north-west of the Island of Rhodes, at a slow pace, against adverse winds. From here their natural course would have been westerly; but the north-west wind drove them south to the island of Crete at its eastern end, and again prevented their making any port on its northern side, so that they were obliged to put in at Fair Havens, near the point at which the southern shore of the island bends slightly to the north. This bend brought them directly in face of the north-west wind again; and the continuance of it made so long a delay necessary, that the time of safe navigation, which closed in October, passed while they were there, and Paul tried to dissuade them from proceeding farther. But, as Fair Havens was not a good place to winter in, they tried to make Phoenix, forty miles to the west. The south wind, for which they were waiting, finally came; and they started. Here is where our lesson begins. The standard account of this voyage is Smith's "Voyage and Shipwreck of St. Paul."

1 And when it was determined that we should sail into Italy, they delivered Paul and certain other prisoners unto *one* named Julius, a centurion of Augustus' band.

2 And entering into a ship of Adramyttium, we launched, meaning to sail by the coasts of Asia; *one* Aristarchus, a Macedonian of Thessalonica, being with us.

14 But not long after there arose against it a tempestuous wind, called Euroclydon.

15 And when the ship was caught, and could not bear up into the wind, we let *her* drive.

16 And running under a certain island which is called Clauda, we had much work to come by the boat:

1 And when it was determined that we should sail for Italy, they delivered Paul and certain other prisoners to a centurion named Julius, of the Augustan ¹ band.

2 And embarking in a ship of Adramyttium, which was about to sail unto the places on the coast of Asia, we put to sea, Aristarchus, a Macedonian of Thessalonica, being with us.

14 But after no long time there beat down from it a tempestuous wind, which is called Euraquilo:

15 and when the ship was caught, and could not face the wind, we gave way to it, and were driven. And running under the lee of a small island called ²Cauda, we were able, with

¹ Or, cohort. ² Many ancient authorities read *Clauda*.

NOTES.—1. *They delivered Paul*: Those who acted under Festus' order in this matter. *And certain other prisoners*: It was not a very uncommon thing to have prisoners sent to Rome for trial. *A centurion of Augustus' band* ("of the Augustan band," Rev. Ver.): The marginal translation *cohort* is stricter (see on 21:31, Lesson VI.). The probable explanation of the term *Augustan* is, that this cohort formed the procurator's body-guard, and so corresponded to the emperor's body-guard, and took its name.

2. *Entering into* ("embarking in," Rev. Ver.). *Adramyttium*: A town on the coast of Mysia, the most northern of the three districts forming Asia Minor. *We launched, meaning to sail by the coasts of Asia* ("which was about to sail unto the places on the coast of Asia, we put to sea," Rev. Ver.). *One Aristarchus*: Omit the *One* (Rev. Ver.). This is the Aristarchus mentioned in 19:29; 20:4. He is mentioned in two of the epistles written from Rome (see Philem 24; Col. 4:10).

14. *There arose against it* ("there beat down from it," Rev. Ver.): That is, from the island of Crete. *Against it* would have to be referred to the vessel, which has not been mentioned lately; and the word for "which" in the Greek, to which *it* would have to refer, has not been used at all. *A tempestuous wind*: In the original, a typhoonic wind,—one in which the opposing currents cause the whirling of the clouds. *Euroclydon* ("Euraquilo," Rev. Ver.): The word Euroclydon is of doubtful meaning; but Euraquilo denotes a north-east wind, which is the wind that would drive them to the island of Clauda, directly south of Crete.

15. *And when the ship was caught*: And the ship being caught, and not being able to face the wind. These are participial clauses, and denote the reason of their letting the vessel drive, and not simply the time of it. *We let her drive* ("we gave way to it, and were driven," Rev. Ver.).

16. *And running under* ("under the lee of," Rev. Ver.): The term implies two things: first, that they went before the wind; and, secondly, that they went under the lee of the island, i.e., as the wind was north-east, on the south side of it. The name of the island was Claudos or Gaudos (the Cauda of the Revised Version), and it lay a few miles only south of Crete. *We had much work to come by the boat* ("we were able, with difficulty, to secure the boat," Rev. Ver.): The boat had been towed astern; and it became necessary to secure it, in case of disaster to the vessel. This was impossible, until they had gained the comparative quiet of the lee shore; and even then it was secured with difficulty.

17 Which when they had taken up, they used helps, undergirding the ship; and, fearing lest they should fall into the quicksands, strake sail, and so were driven.

18 And we being exceedingly tossed with a tempest, the next day they lightened the ship.

19 And the third day we cast out with our own hands the tackling of the ship.

20 And when neither sun nor stars in many days appeared, and no small tempest lay on us, all hope that we should be saved was then taken away.

21 But after long abstinence Paul stood forth in the midst of them, and said, Sirs, ye should have hearkened unto me, and not have loosed

17 difficulty, to secure the boat : and when they had hoisted it up, they used helps, undergirding the ship ; and, fearing lest they should be cast upon the Syrtis, they lowered the gear, and so 18 were driven. And as we labored exceedingly with the storm, the next day they began to throw 19 the freight overboard ; and the third day they cast out with their own hands the ¹ tackling of the 20 ship. And when neither sun nor stars shone upon us for many days, and no small tempest lay on us, all hope that we should be saved was now taken away. 21 And when they had been long without food, then Paul stood forth in the midst of them, and

¹ Or, *furniture*.

17. *They used helps, undergirding the ship* : These helps, the purpose of which is described in the next clause, were cables passed under the vessel, and fastened over the deck, to help hold it together against the severe strain of a storm. They are rarely used now, but were common then. *The quicksands* ("the Syrtis," Rev. Ver.): These were two gulfs on the African coast, noted for their frequent and dangerous quicksands, or shoals. One of these was the Syrtis Major, between Cyrene and Leptis; and the other, the Syrtis Minor, near Carthage. The Syrtis Minor is too far west, and it is therefore the Syrtis Major that is meant. *Strake sail* ("lowered the gear," Rev. Ver.): There are two possible interpretations of this language. The first is, that they lowered the mainsail, and allowed the ship to drive before the wind. This best suits the language, and it partly relieves the difficulty; since, while the direction of the vessel would remain unchanged, and she would still drive toward the Syrtis, it would be with greatly lessened speed. But it leaves unaccounted for the fact that the vessel finally brought up at Malta, which lies a little north of west from its present position south of Crete. With nothing but a north-east wind to guide it, it must have gone south-west. The other explanation is, that they lowered the topsail, or the top-gear, keeping the mainsail set. Then, by keeping the head of the vessel as close to the wind as possible, and adjusting the sail, she is laid-to, and will drift very slowly. A vessel laid-to in this way on the starboard tack would drift, under the conditions named here, in the direction of Malta, and so as to reach there in the neighborhood of fourteen days.

18. *They lightened the ship* ("they began to throw the freight overboard," Rev. Ver.): The chief difficulty obviated by this was the danger that the ship would go to pieces. Vessels were not built so as to resist a gale like the one described here; and, of course, the ship's lading would increase the strain.

19. *We cast out . . . the tackling of the ship* ("they cast out," Rev. Ver.): The word which is translated *tackling* here more probably means furniture,—such as beds, tables, cooking utensils, chests, and the like. Their doing this *with their own hands* increases the vividness of the description of danger.

20. *In many days appeared* ("shone upon us for many days," Rev. Ver.): This disappearance of the sun and stars, as they were out of sight of land, took away their only means of reckoning their position.

21. *After long abstinence* ("when they had been long without food," Rev. Ver.): This was owing partly to dejection, partly to their constant employment, and partly to the

from Crete, and to have gained this harm and loss.

22 And now I exhort you to be of good cheer: for there shall be no loss of *any man's* life among you, but of the ship.

23 For there stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am, and whom I serve,

24 Saying, Fear not, Paul; thou must be brought before Cæsar: and, lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee.

25 Wherefore, sirs, be of good cheer: for I believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me.

26 Howbeit we must be cast upon a certain island.

27 said, Sirs, ye should have hearkened unto me, and not have set sail from Crete, and have gotten this injury and loss. And now I exhort you to be of good cheer: for there shall be no loss of life among you, but *only* of the ship.
 28 For there stood by me this night an angel of the God whose I am, 29 whom also I serve, saying, Fear not, Paul; thou must stand before Cæsar: and lo, God hath granted thee all them that sail with thee. Wherefore, sirs, be of good cheer: for I believe God, that it shall be even so as it hath been spoken unto me.
 30 Howbeit we must be cast upon a certain island.

difficulty of preparing food. *Of them:* The ship's people, — officers and crew. *Ye should have hearkened unto me.* (See verses 9-11.) *And to have gained this harm and loss:* And have gotten this violence and loss. The first noun denotes the violence, the insolence, of the storm; and the second, the loss inflicted by it. Paul does not say this for the sake of reproaching them, but to give weight to what he says now.

22. *There shall be no loss of life:* Before, he had said, that there would be much loss of life, as well as of the lading and ship; but that was only his opinion, and not, therefore, infallible, while this is a revelation.

23. *The angel of God:* A messenger of the God. Paul is addressing Gentiles, and the language is probably adapted to their idea of things.

24. *Fear not, Paul; thou must be brought before Cæsar* ("thou must stand before Cæsar," Rev. Ver.): The *must* here rests on the divine purpose, and this certainty removes the present danger. *God hath given thee all them that sail with thee:* That is, he has spared them for your sake.

25. *Be of good cheer:* The mention of fasting in connection with this exhortation, in verses 21, 22, shows that Paul wished not only to cheer them up, but to encourage them to take food.

26. *We must be cast upon a certain island:* This was apparently a part of the revelation.

LESSON II.

PAUL'S SHIPWRECK.—Acts 27:27-44.

A GENERAL VIEW.—There are various examples, in this account of Paul's voyage and shipwreck, of his influence over men, and of the impression that he made on them as a man possessed of judgment, and force of character. The favor granted him at Sidon (verse 3) shows that he had already impressed the centurion in charge of the prisoners favorably. The fact that he was heard, though his advice was not taken, in regard to the sailing of the vessel from Fair Havens, points in the same direction (verses 9-11). We are not told what effect his rehearsal of his vision, assuring them of safety, had upon the ship's company; but there is an admirable self-possession about it. Then, when the last night came, and the sailors, frightened at the leaky condition of the vessel and the nearness

27 But when the fourteenth night was come, as we were driven up and down in Adria, about midnight the shipmen deemed that they drew near to some country;

28 And sounded, and found *it* twenty fathoms: and when they had gone a little further, they sounded again, and found *it* fifteen fathoms.

29 Then fearing lest we should have fallen upon rocks, they cast four anchors out of the stern, and wished for the day.

30 And as the shipmen were about to flee out of the ship, when they had let down the boat into the sea, under color as though they would have cast anchors out of the foreship,

27 But when the fourteenth night was come, as we were driven to and fro in the *sea of Adria*, about midnight the sailors surmised that they were drawing near to 28 some country; and they sounded, and found twenty fathoms: and after a little space, they sounded again, and found fifteen fathoms. 29 And fearing lest haply we should be cast ashore on rocky ground, they let go four anchors from the stern, and ¹wished for the 30 day. And as the sailors were seeking to flee out of the ship, and had lowered the boat into the sea, under color as though they would lay out anchors from 31 the foreship, Paul said to the centurion and to the soldiers,

¹ Or, *prayed*.

of the breakers, were about to desert the ship, and betake themselves to the boat, Paul thwarts their plan; and this time, whatever may have been the effect before, Paul succeeded in gaining such an ascendancy over the panic-stricken company as to persuade them to take food, and cheer up. And, finally, the centurion's regard for Paul was the means of saving all the prisoners' lives, when the soldiers, afraid of their escaping in the confusion, proposed to kill them. When we reflect that Paul was a prisoner, a despised Jew, and a Christian withal, this indicates a rare personal quality.

NOTES. — 27. *The fourteenth night*: From Fair Havens. *Driven up and down*: As we have seen, there was probably a comparatively steady wind, and a correspondingly steady drift; but this is not inconsistent with the tossing to and fro that is described here. *In Adria*: The Adriatic Sea. Strictly speaking, this term applied only to the sea east of the northern part of Italy, the leg of the boot; that east of the foot, or southern part, being known as the Ionian Sea: but the term was frequently used of the sea as far south as Sicily. *That they drew near to some country*: Literally, that some land was approaching them,—a *naïve* transfer to Luke's account of the appearance aboard ship as one approaches land. They would judge this from the sound of the breakers.

28. *Twenty fathoms . . . fifteen fathoms*: This rapid shoaling of the water confirmed their surmise.

29. *Then fearing lest we should have fallen upon rocks*: And fearing lest we might, perchance, fall on rocky ground. This fear was well grounded in this case, as the fifteen-fathom sounding is only about a quarter of a mile from a rocky, precipitous shore. *They cast four anchors out of the stern*: They anchored from the stern, instead of the bow, to prevent the vessel's swinging round, which might bring her on the rocks; and because it would leave her all ready, with her head pointed in the direction that they wanted to go. It is mentioned here as being unusual. *And wished for day*: They were surrounded by unknown dangers, on an evidently perilous coast; it was uncertain how long the anchors would hold, and doubtful whether the already strained and leaking ship could last through the night. When day came, they would know where they were, and could make for the shore. The words may mean equally well that they *prayed* that day might come (Rev. Ver., margin).

30. *And as the shipmen were about to flee out of the ship* ("the sailors were seeking to flee," Rev. Ver.). *Under color as though they would have cast anchors* ("would lay out," Rev. Ver.): The boat would not be necessary to cast out

31 Paul said to the centurion and to the soldiers, Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved.

32 Then the soldiers cut off the ropes of the boat, and let her fall off.

33 And while the day was coming on, Paul besought *them* all to take meat, saying, This day is the fourteenth day that ye have tarried and continued fasting, having taken nothing.

34 Wherefore I pray you to take *some* meat: for this is for your health: for there shall not an hair fall from the head of any of you.

35 And when he had thus spoken, he took bread, and gave thanks to God in presence of them all: and when he had broken *it*, he began to eat.

36 Then were they all of good cheer, and they also took *some* meat.

37 And we were in all in the ship two hundred threescore and sixteen souls.

Except these abide in the ship, 32 ye cannot be saved. Then the soldiers cut away the ropes of the boat, and let her fall off. 33 And while the day was coming on, Paul besought them all to take some food, saying, This day is the fourteenth day that ye wait and continue fasting, having taken nothing. Wherefore I beseech you to take some food: for this is for your safety: for there shall not a hair perish from the head of any of you. And when he had said this, and had taken bread, he gave thanks to God in the presence of all: and he brake it, and began to eat. 36 Then were they all of good cheer, and themselves also took food. And we were in all in the ship ¹two hundred threescore 38 and sixteen souls. And when they had eaten enough, they lightened the ship, throwing out 39 the wheat into the sea. And when it was day, they knew not

¹ Some ancient authorities read *about threescore and sixteen souls*.

the anchors. Their pretext was to carry out the anchors to the full length of the cables, and then cast them off.

31. *Paul said to the centurion and to the soldiers*: He appealed to them; since, apparently, the ship's officers had lost control of their men. *Ye cannot be saved*: The pronoun is emphatic. Paul appeals to their personal desire for safety. He had told them before, that they were all going to be saved unconditionally; but no man is justified, because of such a prediction, in throwing away the means of safety, or in expecting the safety without them.

33. *Have tarried* ("wait," Rev. Ver.): They were waiting for, expecting, some termination to this agony. It was this anxious waiting that kept them from eating.

34. *For this is for your health* ("your safety," Rev. Ver.): They needed food to carry them through the labors and dangers that lay between them and the land. *There shall not an hair fall from the head of any of you* ("perish," Rev. Ver.): Here again Paul couples a promise of safety with directions as to the means of obtaining it. He wishes, moreover, to encourage them to take food by removing their fears.

35. *He took bread, and gave thanks to God in presence of them all: and when he had broken it, he began to eat*: The breaking of the bread was accompanied by its distribution; and in this, and the giving of thanks, Paul took the place of the father of a family, and presided at the meal. He did not leave the matter to mere exhortation, but himself set the example of eating, and inaugurated the meal.

36. *And they also* ("themselves also," Rev. Ver.): Their fear being relieved, hunger asserted itself.

37. *And we were in all*: The picture of the ship's company all together that is before the writer's mind makes him speak of their number. Two hundred and seventy-six was a large company, and indicates a large vessel.

38 And when they had eaten enough, they lightened the ship, and cast out the wheat into the sea.

39 And when it was day, they knew not the land: but they discovered a certain creek with a shore, into the which they were minded, if it were possible, to thrust in the ship.

40 And when they had taken up the anchors, they committed *themselves* unto the sea, and loosed the rudder bands, and hoisted up the mainsail to the wind, and made toward shore.

41 And falling into a place where two seas met, they ran the ship aground; and the forepart stuck fast, and remained unmovable, but the hinder part was broken with the violence of the waves.

the land: but they perceived a certain bay with a beach, and they took counsel whether they could ¹ drive the ship upon it.

40 And casting off the anchors, they left them in the sea, at the same time loosing the bands of the rudders; and hoisting up the foresail to the wind, they made

41 for the beach. But lighting upon a place where two seas met, they ran the vessel aground; and the foreship struck and remained unmovable, but the stern began to break up by the violence of

42 *the waves*. And the soldiers' counsel was to kill the prisoners, lest any *of them* should swim 43 out, and escape. But the centurion, desiring to save Paul, stayed them from their purpose;

¹ Some ancient authorities read *bring the ship safe to shore*.

38. *Throwing out the wheat*: Probably this had been thrown out already (see verse 18 and note), and what they threw overboard now was the ship's provisions. The fact that they did it after they had eaten enough points to this.

39. *They knew not the land*: Even if they were acquainted with the island, they would not know this place necessarily, as the harbor of the island was at Valetta, several miles south of this. *They discovered a certain creek with a shore* ("with a beach," Rev. Ver.); The word denotes a sandy or pebbly, flat coast, as distinguished from the rocky, high shore that lines most of the bay. St. Paul's Bay was the place of the shipwreck; and the only such inlets as are described here were at the western end of the bay, farthest from its opening. *Into the which*: Upon which, probably, referring to the beach, not the inlet.

40. *And when they had taken up the anchors, they committed themselves unto the sea* ("and casting off the anchors, they left them in the sea," Rev. Ver.): They cut away the anchors, and let their cables fall into the sea. They avoided taking them up, because it would waste their time over what was no longer of any use to them. *And loosed the rudder bands* ("at the same time loosing the bands of the rudders," Rev. Ver.): While they were at anchor, the rudders had been pulled up clear of the water, and out of danger of fouling with the anchors, and fastened. Now these fastenings were loosed, and the rudders put in position again. *And hoisted up the mainsail* ("the foresail," Rev. Ver.): The word means something hung or fastened, and that is about as far as we can get; but, by a long process of nautical and archaeological research, the meaning *foresail* has been fastened to it with some probability. These three things—cutting loose the anchors, putting the rudders into place, and hoisting a light sail—were the necessary preparations.

41. *And falling into a place where two seas met*: This has been explained variously; but the explanation which seems to be justified by the topography of the scene of shipwreck—the language seeming to be an indecisive quantity here—refers it to the opening between the little island of Salmonetta and the western shore of the bay. Just where the waters of this narrow channel met those of the bay is supposed to be the place where they ran the ship aground; and it is the place, too, where the shore admits of such a manœuvre. *And the forepart stuck fast*: There is a muddy bottom in the inlet here, which explains this statement. *But the hinder part was broken with the*

42 And the soldiers' counsel was to kill the prisoners, lest any of them should swim out, and escape.

43 But the centurion, willing to save Paul, kept them from *their* purpose; and commanded that they which could swim should cast *themselves* first *into the sea*, and get to land:

44 And the rest, some on boards, and some on *broken pieces* of the ship. And so it came to pass, that they escaped all safe to land.

and commanded that they which could swim should cast themselves overboard, and get first 44 to the land: and the rest, some on planks, and some on *other* things from the ship. And so it came to pass, that they all escaped safe to the land.

violence of the waves ("the stern began to break up by the violence of the waves," Rev. Ver.): There was water enough to float the stern of the vessel, which was left, therefore, to the pounding of the waves, so that the dreaded result had come at last.

42. *To kill the prisoners*: The Roman Government required a very strict account of its prisoners, and even such extenuating circumstances as these might not save a soldier from death if his prisoner escaped.

43. *Willing to save Paul* ("desiring to save," Rev. Ver.).

44. *Some on boards, and some on broken pieces of the ship*: The Revised Version renders, *Some on planks, and some on other things from the ship*. All the furniture and loose stuff had been thrown overboard, or floated off before this, apparently. These must have been parts of the wreck, it would seem.

LESSON III.

PAUL GOING TO ROME.—Acts 28:1-15.

A GENERAL VIEW.—Malta, on which Paul and his company had been cast, was an island in the Mediterranean, about sixty miles south of the south-eastern corner of Sicily. It is seventeen miles long, nine miles in its greatest width, and sixty miles in circumference. It was inhabited by Phoenicians, like the African coast south-west of it, and first became subject to Rome in the second Punic war. The island was made a part of the province of Sicily, and was governed by a legate of its *prætor*. It has been denied that Melita and Malta are identical here; and Meleda in the Adriatic, near the coast of Illyricum, has been made the scene of the shipwreck. But the indications in Luke's narrative have been followed out with untiring minuteness by Mr. Smith, in the book that we have mentioned; and they all point decisively to Malta, and the arguments on the other side have been answered. In the voyage from Malta, they touched first at Syracuse, the well-known city on the eastern coast of Sicily; then they made their way against adverse winds to Rhegium, a town in the extreme south of Italy; then, the wind becoming favorable again, they made their way to Puteoli on the Bay of Naples, and from thence by foot to Rome. Paul's cherished purpose was accomplished at last: he was in Rome.

1 And when they were escaped, then they knew that the island was called Melita.

1 And when we were escaped, then we knew that the island 2 was called ¹Melita. And the

¹ Some ancient authorities read *Melitene*.

NOTES.—1. *Then we knew that the island was called Melita*: Probably by inquiry of the natives.

2 And the barbarous people shewed us no little kindness: for they kindled a fire, and received us every one, because of the present rain, and because of the cold.

3 And when Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks, and laid *them* on the fire, there came a viper out of the heat, and fastened on his hand.

4 And when the barbarians saw the *venomous* beast hang on his hand, they said among themselves, No doubt this man is a murderer, whom, though he hath escaped the sea, yet vengeance suffereth not to live.

5 And he shook off the beast into the fire, and felt no harm.

6 Howbeit they looked when he should have swollen, or fallen down dead suddenly: but after they had looked a great while, and saw no harm come to him, they changed their minds, and said that he was a god.

barbarians shewed us no common kindness: for they kindled a fire, and received us all, because of the present rain, and because of the cold. But when Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks, and laid them on the fire, a viper came out ¹ by reason of the heat, and fastened on his hand. And when the barbarians saw the beast hanging from his hand, they said one to another, No doubt this man is a murderer, whom, though he hath escaped from the sea, yet Justice hath not suffered to live. Howbeit he shook off the beast into the fire, and took no harm. But they expected that he would have swollen, or fallen down dead suddenly: but when they were long in expectation, and beheld nothing amiss come to him, they changed their minds, and said that he was a god.

¹ Or, *from the heat.*

2. *And the barbarous people shewed us no little kindness* ("barbarians," and "no common kindness," Rev. Ver.): The term *barbarians* denotes nothing more than that they spoke a strange language, and was applied to all except Greeks and Romans. The Phœnician language was a branch of the same tongue as the Hebrew. The word for *kindness* here is the same as our word *philanthropy*. *Because of the present rain*: On account of the rain which came on us. They had just escaped from a shipwreck, and had barely escaped drowning, and were in no condition to stand further exposure.

3. *There came a viper out of the heat* ("A viper came out by reason of the heat," Rev. Ver.): He was probably rendered torpid by the cold; and the heat roused him, and drove him out.

4. *The venomous beast* ("the beast," Rev. Ver.): The venomousness is not implied in the name, but in the whole narrative, and especially in the fact that the natives recognized this as a poisonous snake. *Yet vengeance suffereth not to live* ("Yet Justice hath not suffered," Rev. Ver.): There is here a personification or deification of this attribute. The severity of the punishment made them think that he was guilty of a heinous crime. They knew already that he was a prisoner.

5. *Howbeit they looked when he should have swollen*: But they were expecting that he was to swell up. They were looking for it as something sure to happen. They knew the venomous nature of the snake, and the fatal results of his bite. *But after they had looked a great while* ("But when they were long in expectation," Rev. Ver.): The verb is the same as in the first clause of the verse. *No harm* ("nothing amiss," Rev. Ver.): The idea of the words is, *nothing out of place*. It comes to be applied to any thing abnormal, out of the usual course. *And said that he was a god*: A sudden and extreme change, but not unusual in simple-minded people. They had never seen a man come out of such an experience whole; and so they reasoned that he was not man, but god. "A man of God" was the golden mean, and the right conclusion. (Bengel.)

7 In the same quarters were possessions of the chief man of the island, whose name was Publius; who received us, and lodged us three days courteously.

8 And it came to pass, that the father of Publius lay sick of a fever and of a bloody flux: to whom Paul entered in, and prayed, and laid his hands on him, and healed him.

9 So when this was done, others also, which had diseases in the island, came, and were healed:

10 Who also honoured us with many honours; and when we departed, they laded *us* with such things as were necessary.

11 And after three months we departed in a ship of Alexandria, which had wintered in the isle, whose sign was Castor and Pollux.

7 Now in the neighbourhood of that place were lands belonging to the chief man of the island, named Publius; who received us, and entertained us three days courteously. And it was so, that the father of Publius lay sick of fever and dysentery: unto whom Paul entered in, and prayed, and laying his hands on him healed him. And when this was done, the rest also which had diseases in the island came, and were 10 cured: who also honoured us with many honours; and when we sailed, they put on board such things as we needed.

11 And after three months we set sail in a ship of Alexandria, which had wintered in the isle, whose sign was ¹The Twin

¹ Gr. *Dioscuri*.

7. *In the same quarters were possessions of* ("Now in the neighbourhood of that place were lands belonging to," Rev. Ver.) *The chief man of the island:* Probably this was not in itself an official title. But the chief man would be probably the Roman governor, i.e., the legate of the prætor of Sicily. This Publius is not otherwise known, but it is a Roman name. *Lodged us three days courteously* ("Entertained us," Rev. Ver.): The idea of the word is, that he received them as his guests. *Courteously*: In a friendly way.

8. *Of a fever and of a bloody flux* ("Of fever and dysentery," Rev. Ver.): The exact description of the disease is probably due to the presence of the physician Luke, whose presence has been indicated by the use of the first person plural in the narrative, since Paul's departure from Philippi (chapter 20: 6). *Prayed, and laid his hands on him*: The prayer signified that the healing power came from God. The laying on of hands signified the transmission of the healing power from Paul to the sick man.

10. *Who also honoured us with many honours*: This may mean that they rewarded Paul with gifts in return for his healings; but this is contrary to Matt. 10: 8, and is not demanded by the language. *And when we departed, they laded us with such things as were necessary* ("and when we sailed, they put on board," Rev. Ver.): The language may mean, either that they put on them these things, or that they put them on (board) for them. While they were on the island, the inhabitants showed them such marks of honor and regard as befitted persons who had done them such favors; and, when they set sail, they contributed to their wants. But, in all this, there was no mention of pay for services rendered.

11. *We departed* ("set sail," Rev. Ver.). *A ship of Alexandria, which had wintered in the isle*: The island lay nearly in the track of an Alexandrian ship, bound for the western coast of Italy. The ship probably was caught in the same storm which shipwrecked Paul's vessel, but was able to make the safe harbor of Valetta, where it wintered. *Whose sign was Castor and Pollux* ("The Twin Brothers," Rev. Ver.): Or, Dioscuri. Ancient vessels had an image painted or carved on the prow, by which they were distinguished, and which gave the ship its name. As Castor and Pollux were the tutelary divinities of sailors, this would be a common sign.

12 And landing at Syracuse, we tarried *there* three days.

13 And from thence we fetched a compass, and came to Rhegium: and after one day the south wind blew, and we came the next day to Puteoli:

14 Where we found brethren, and were desired to tarry with them seven days: and so we went toward Rome.

15 And from thence, when the brethren heard of us, they came to meet us as far as Appii forum, and The three taverns; whom when Paul saw, he thanked God, and took courage.

12 Brothers. And touching at Syracuse, we tarried there three days. And from thence we made a circuit, and arrived at Rhegium: and after one day a south wind sprang up, and on the second day we came to Puteoli: where we found brethren, and were intreated to tarry with them seven days: and so we

15 came to Rome. And from thence the brethren, when they heard of us, came to meet us as far as The Market of Appius, and The Three Taverns: whom when Paul saw, he thanked God, and took courage.

¹ Some ancient authorities read *cast loose*.

12. *And landing at Syracuse* ("touching at Syracuse," Rev. Ver.): Or, putting in at. The word is the opposite of the one for "set sail" in verses 10, 11; and, strictly speaking, it refers to bringing the vessel in, and not to the landing of its passengers.

13. *We fetched a compass*: All that the language means is that they *went around*. It is used in Acts 19: 13; Heb. 11: 37, of persons going about from one place to another; and probably it denotes here the circuitous route of the vessel under unfavorable winds. *The south wind blew* ("a south wind sprang up," Rev. Ver.): This was, of course, a favorable wind, so that they made the rest of the voyage quickly. *Puteoli*: The distance from Rhegium was a hundred and eighty miles, and the time therefore was quick. Puteoli was eight miles south-west of Naples, in the Bay of Naples, and was the principal port of Italy south of Rome. The vessel stopped here, as most of the corn-ships from Egypt did, this being the port to which that trade was brought.

14. *Were desired to tarry* ("were intreated," Rev. Ver.). *And so we went toward Rome*: That is, after the delay of seven days at Puteoli. Their journey would be to Capua, a distance of twelve miles, where they would strike the Appian Way, leading directly to Rome. That city was distant one hundred and twenty-five miles from Capua.

15. *When the brethren heard of us*: Better, having heard of us. It denotes the occasion as well as the time of their sending. Probably word was sent of the apostle's arrival from Puteoli. *Appii forum*: The name of a well-known station on the Appian Way, about forty-three miles from Rome. There was a canal through the Pontine Marshes, running parallel with the road for about twenty miles, of which Appii Forum was the northern terminus. It is possible that the centurion may have brought his party over this canal. *The three taverns*: Tres Tabernæ; another station on the Appian Way, thirty miles from Rome. *He thanked God, and took courage*: Paul had been looking forward to this visit to Rome with great expectation, and, as his Epistle to the Romans shows us, with some anxiety. This eagerness of the brethren to see him, showing itself in two parties coming many miles to meet him and receive him, must have been a great encouragement.

LESSON IV.

PAUL AT ROME.—Acts 28:16-31.

A GENERAL VIEW.—Three years before this arrival at Rome, Paul had written a letter to the church in that city. In it he had sent a long list of salutations to members of the church, showing that, while he had never been there, he had a numerous acquaintance among the brethren. He had also expressed a very earnest wish to come to Rome, and preach the gospel there, that he might gather some of its fruit in Rome, as well as elsewhere among the Gentiles. In this letter, too, in order to prepare the way for his coming to a church not founded by himself, he had made the most elaborate statement of his gospel, —the universal gospel that he, as the apostle to the Gentiles, preached,—defending it against all the attempts of Judaizing false teachers to narrow its scope, or change its form. He had, moreover, drawn out at great length his view of the relation of the Jews to this gospel, of the people of God to the gospel of God. And now he was in Rome, not as a preacher, but as a prisoner, of Jesus Christ; not so much because he preached the gospel, as because of the peculiar form of freedom and universality, so obnoxious to the exclusiveness and pride of the Jews, that he gave to it. He was here, nominally, as the prisoner of Rome, but really in order that Rome might judge between himself and the Jews in regard to this very controversy which had been the subject of the epistle, and decide whether his preaching of Christianity constituted an unlawful attack on Judaism. He varies his usual course, therefore, by taking up with the Jews first this matter of his imprisonment; and only when he found that they had no controversy with him about that, did he turn to the gospel itself, which he preached with the usual meagre and doubtful success to the Jews, and then turned to the Gentiles.

16 And when we came to Rome, the centurion delivered the prisoners to the captain of the guard: but Paul was suffered to dwell by himself with a soldier that kept him.

17 And it came to pass, that after three days Paul called the chief of the Jews together: and when they were come together, he said unto them, Men and brethren, though I have committed nothing against the

16 And when we entered into Rome, ¹ Paul was suffered to abide by himself with the soldier that guarded him.

17 And it came to pass, that after three days he called together ² those that were the chief of the Jews: and when they were come together, he said unto them, I, brethren, though I had done nothing against the people, or

¹ Some ancient authorities insert *the centurion delivered the prisoners to the captain of the prætorian guard: but.* ² Or, *those that were of the Jews first.*

NOTES.—16. *And when we came to Rome, the centurion delivered the prisoners to the captain of the guard; but Paul was suffered* (“And when we entered into Rome, Paul was suffered,” Rev. Ver.): This permission was in accordance with a common practice of the Roman Government in the case of prisoners not specially obnoxious to it. Paul’s case would be represented favorably by Festus who found nothing against him, and by the centurion Julius who had treated him with so uniform consideration and distinction even. **Dwell by himself:** Instead of being herded with other prisoners, or kept in the prætorian camp; but he had to be chained to the soldier guarding him.

17. **After three days:** He lost no time in using the liberty allowed him for his work. The three days had been employed, in all probability, in exchange of greetings between himself and the church, of which Luke says nothing. **Paul called** (“he called,” Rev.

people, or customs of our fathers, yet was I delivered prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans:

18 Who, when they had examined me, would have let *me* go, because there was no cause of death in me.

19 But when the Jews spake against *it*, I was constrained to appeal unto Cæsar; not that I had aught to accuse my nation of.

20 For this cause therefore have I called for you, to see *you*, and to speak with *you*: because that for the hope of Israel I am bound with this chain.

the customs of our fathers, yet was delivered prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the

18 Romans: who, when they had examined me, desired to set me at liberty, because there was no

19 cause of death in me. But when the Jews spake against it, I was constrained to appeal unto Cæsar;

20 accuse my nation of. For this cause therefore did I ¹intreat you to see and to speak with *me*:

21 I am bound with this chain. And they said unto him, We neither

¹ Or, *call for you, to see and to speak with you.*

Ver.): *The chief of the Jews*: Evidently, from what follows, the unconverted Jews only. *Though I have committed nothing against the people, or customs of our fathers* ("the customs," Rev. Ver.): Paul's thought, as a Christian, had been to reconcile his position with his Judaism; and hence he regarded his work as not in any sense anti-Jewish. Jesus was to him the Jewish Messiah, so that to preach him was not contrary to the Jewish people; and Christianity he regarded as the completion of the Mosaic statutes, and the final form of the Jewish system, so that to teach it was not contrary to the ancestral customs. *Yet was I delivered prisoner*: This is certainly a mild and conciliatory way of stating the fact that he was rescued from an infuriated Jewish mob by the Roman authorities; but it states well enough what Paul wished to convey,—that his present imprisonment was due to Jewish hostility. Paul was moved to this defence of himself, as his first move, by the necessity of explaining his condition as a prisoner, by the probability or possibility that they had received instructions from Jerusalem against him, and by the hope of conciliating them before his trial came on.

18. *Who . . . would have let me go* ("desired to set me at liberty," Rev. Ver.): This was true of both Felix and Festus (see 24:22, 23, 27; 25:18, 19); that is, they were convinced of his innocence, and kept him a prisoner only on account of the Jews.

19. *But when the Jews spake against it, I was constrained to appeal unto Cæsar*: This is a new combination of the facts, as Paul's appeal to Cæsar was owing to Festus' proposition that he should be tried at Jerusalem; but it is a combination easily enough made by putting together 25:9 and 25:18, 19. The evident opposition of the Jews to Paul's acquittal was all that prevented it; as it was a cardinal principle of the empire, in its government of the provinces, to conciliate the inhabitants. Paul's statement in this case, too, was due to his desire to suppress facts unfavorable to his countrymen. His attitude was conciliatory throughout. *Not that I had aught to accuse my nation of*: Paul's attitude in this matter was purely a defensive one.

20. *For this cause therefore have I called for you, to see you, and to speak with you* ("did I," etc., Rev. Ver.): The other change suggested by the revisers,—to supply *me*, instead of *you*, after the infinitives,—while allowable as an alternative, does not seem preferable. By *this cause*, Paul means his whole attitude toward the question between himself and the Jews, as just stated by him. He was not in any way hostile to the Jews, nor to their religion; and he wished to remove their prejudice by making this appear. *For the hope of Israel*: Here he comes to the positive reason for inviting this consultation. He wished to lay before them the fact, that it was not for discarding nor opposing Judaism, but for the hope of Israel, that he was bound. Of course, he refers here to the Messianic expectation of the Jews.

21 And they said unto him, We neither received letters out of Judæa concerning thee, neither any of the brethren that came shewed or spake any harm of thee.

22 But we desire to hear of thee what thou thinkest: for as concerning this sect, we know that everywhere it is spoken against.

23 And when they had appointed him a day, there came many to him into *his* lodging: to whom he expounded and testified the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus, both out of the law of Moses, and *out of* the prophets, from morning till evening.

24 And some believed the things which were spoken, and some believed not.

25 And when they agreed not among themselves, they departed, after that Paul had spoken one word, Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias the prophet unto our fathers,

received letters from Judæa concerning thee, nor did any of the brethren come hither and report 22 or speak any harm of thee. But we desire to hear of thee what thou thinkest: for as concerning this sect, it is known to us that everywhere it is spoken against.

23 And when they had appointed him a day, they came to him into his lodging in great number; to whom he expounded *the matter*, testifying the kingdom of God, and persuading them concerning Jesus, both from the law of Moses and from the prophets,

24 from morning till evening. And some believed the things which were spoken, and some disbelieved.

25 And when they agreed not among themselves, they departed, after that Paul had spoken one word, Well spake the Holy Ghost ¹by Isaiah the prophet unto your fathers, saying

¹ Or, through.

21. *We neither received letters*: Probably they had received no communications since Paul's appeal to Cæsar, preparing them for his presence in Rome; but it is almost impossible to suppose that there had been no communication between them and Judæa during this time, and that so important a matter had not been mentioned, or even fully canvassed. But, as Meyer suggests, they fall back on their official position, and disclaim receiving any official communication about it. What reports they had heard as private persons, they say nothing about. They wish to appear in the matter as unprejudiced persons.

22. *But we desire*: Better, we think it proper. They had heard nothing, and so brought no charges against him; but they thought it proper to hear from him, so as to form some judgment about the case. *What thou thinkest*: In general, what his opinions and principles were. *This sect*: This party, or school, of religious thought. *That everywhere it is spoken against*: Here, again, they attempt the rôle of ignorance, speaking as if they had no personal knowledge of Christianity, but had heard something about it; and yet there was a large church in Rome, with a mixed Jewish and Gentile membership, which would have forced on their attention every burning question between Christianity and Judaism.

23. *There came many to him into his lodging*: There came more; viz., than on the previous day. His *lodging* is the place where he was entertained as a guest. It was after this that he procured a house for himself. *To whom he expounded and testified* ("he expounded *the matter*, testifying, . . . and persuading," Rev. Ver.): The two participial clauses show in what his exposition consisted. *The kingdom of God*: The Messianic kingdom, showing what was the nature of that kingdom in the Christian system. *Concerning Jesus*: Proving his Messianic claim out of the Scriptures (see 26: 23).

24. *Some believed, . . . and some disbelieved*: The greater part evidently disbelieved.

25. *By Isaiah the prophet*: The quotation is from Isa. 6: 9, 10, and is taken from the

26 Saying, Go unto this people, and say, Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and not perceive:

27 For the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest they should see with *their* eyes, and hear with *their* ears, and understand with *their* heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.

28 Be it known therefore unto you, that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and *that* they will hear it.

29 And when he had said these words, the Jews departed, and had great reasoning among themselves.

30 And Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired house, and received all that came in unto him,

31 Preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him.

Go thou unto this people, and say,
By hearing ye shall hear, and shall in no wise understand; And seeing ye shall see, and shall in no wise perceive:

27 For this people's heart is waxed gross, And their ears are dull of hearing, And their eyes they have closed; Lest haply they should perceive with their eyes, And hear with their ears, And understand with their heart, And should turn again, And I should heal them.

28 Be it known therefore unto you, that this salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles: they will also hear.¹

30 And he abode two whole years in his own hired dwelling, and received all that went in unto him, preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching the things concerning the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness, none forbidding him.

¹ Some ancient authorities insert verse 29, *And when he had said these words, the Jews departed, having much disputing among themselves.*

Septuagint Version. The original is a command throughout. Here it gives as a reason for the people's hearing without understanding, that their spiritual senses have been dulled through disuse and perversion; and Paul treats it as a description of the permanent, not the temporary and casual, spiritual quality of the Jews.

28. **Be it known therefore to you:** That is, since the Jews' eyes and ears are closed. **The salvation of God** ("this salvation of God," Rev. Ver.). **And that they will hear it:** *They* is emphatic, contrasted with *ye* (verse 26).

29. Omit (Rev. Ver.).

30. **Two whole years:** Probably at the end of that time he was brought to trial, and set at liberty for a time. **In his own hired house:** As distinguished from being a guest in another person's house. **And received:** Welcomed, or received gladly.

31. **With all confidence:** Without any reserve, speaking out all that was in his mind. **None forbidding him:** Without any restraint put on him by the Roman Government.

LESSON V.

OBEDIENCE.—Eph. 6:1-13.

A GENERAL VIEW.—While Paul was a prisoner at Rome, he not only preached to those who came to his house, but he kept himself in communication with the churches that he had founded in Greece and Asia Minor, receiving messages from them, and sending letters to them. Among these letters, probably the first were a group of three sent to churches and to an individual disciple in Asia Minor. Onesimus was to be sent back to his master in Colossæ, to whom he carried a letter,—the Epistle to Philemon. And with him went Tychicus carrying a letter to the church at Colossæ, and also our Epistle. But whether this Epistle was written to the Ephesians, or not, is a matter of some doubt. The words “at Ephesus,” in chapter 1: 1, are omitted in the two oldest Greek manuscripts; and there is other weighty testimony against their genuineness: neither does it seem natural to suppose that Paul should speak of their faith as a thing of which he had heard, when he had himself founded the church only about seven years before, remaining with them three years after that (chapter 1: 15); nor does the way in which he speaks of their *hearing* of the stewardship of the gospel intrusted to him, and of their understanding through some *previous writing* how Paul came to know the mystery of the gospel, seem to be consistent with the supposition that this was an epistle to the Ephesians (chapter 3: 2-4). At the same time, it is very difficult to explain the verse from which the words “at Ephesus” are omitted, without them, or some equivalent for them; and there is no authority for inserting any thing else. If the words are to be omitted therefore, and this letter was not addressed to the Ephesians, it seems the most reasonable supposition, that it was a letter intended for several churches (in Asia Minor), and that this space was therefore left purposely blank, to be filled in each case with the name of the church in whose hands it was for the time. The Epistle falls into two parts, doctrinal and practical. The doctrinal part (chapters 1-3) dwells upon the greatness of the work of salvation, the change that it makes in man’s life and destiny, and its universality. The practical part (chapters 4-6) exhorts to Christian unity, to a life worthy of their new state, and to an observance in the Lord of the duties belonging to their various relations. Our lesson belongs to this last subdivision, taking up the relations between parents and children, and between masters and slaves.

1 Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right.

2 Honour thy father and mother; which is the first commandment with promise;

1 Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right.

2 Honour thy father and mother (which is the first commandment with promise), that it may be

NOTES.—1. *Obey your parents in the Lord:* All duties are looked upon by the apostle as forming part of a life that gets its character from the vital union of the Christian with his Lord. The Christian is one who acts not independently, but in the Lord (see Rom. 16: 2, 22; Phil. 2: 29; Col. 3: 18). It is a peculiarly Pauline expression. **For this is right:** This fulfils the law of your relations to them.

2. *Honour thy father and mother:* This is the law of their feelings, as obedience is of their actions; and it is the principle of obedience. In this form of the command, Paul adopts the language of the Decalogue (Ex. 20: 12; Deut. 5: 16). **Which is the first commandment with promise:** The relative here is in a form indicating that the clause is a reason for what precedes,—*seeing that it is*, etc.; but the reason is not exactly the promise, but the fact that by the promise attached to it the command is given a special prominence. The statement in regard to God, which accompanies the second command,

3 That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth.

4 And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

5 Servants, be obedient to them that are *your* masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ;

6 Not with eyerservice, as men-pleasers; but as the servants of

well with thee, and thou ¹ mayest live long on the ² earth.

4 And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but nurture them in the chastening and admonition of the Lord.

5 ³Servants, be obedient unto them that according to the flesh are your ⁴ masters, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your

6 heart, as unto Christ; not in the way of eyerservice, as men-pleasers; but as ³servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the

¹ Or, *shalt*. ² Or, *land*. ³ Gr. *Bondservants*. ⁴ Gr. *lords*.

is not strictly a promise; and the fact that there is no other "command with promise" in the Decalogue does not make it incorrect to say that this is the first, since it is not necessary to suppose that Paul confines himself to the Decalogue in his enumeration of commands.

3. *That it may be well with thee*: Having stated that there is a promise, Paul proceeds to give it. Prosperity and long life are the things promised. The law kept itself mostly to this life and this earth in its rewards and punishments, and it is in the spiritualizing of these that one great advance is made on the law by the gospel. *On the earth* ("on the land," Rev. Ver. margin): Paul is making a quotation here, and so the words are to be kept to their original sense.

4. *And, ye fathers*: Mothers are included also, since the apostle is treating the mutual duties of parents and children; but the class *parents* is denoted by its principal member, *father*. *Provoke not*: By injustice or harshness. They are to command obedience by mild and just treatment. Their authority rests on love. *But bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord*: In the training and reproof of the Lord. The first is the general word for education or discipline; the second denotes the chastisement, the sharp word or blow, by which evil is corrected. This training and reproof are said to be the Lord's, in the same sense in which children are to obey in the Lord. Christ so dwells in them that their action is his. The meaning is, therefore, that they are to do in this matter what his Spirit in them prompts.

5. *Servants*: *Slaves* is the meaning of the word. The wisdom of Christianity at this early period was, that it attacked no existing institution of government or society, but taught the duties that belonged to men in that frame of things; and it was because it was seen that the new religion produced order and submission, instead of revolt and disturbance, that it was allowed to live. Its principle is the slow process of repair and growth, not violent upheaval. It trusted the Spirit and the truth to bring about the time when men should see that its principles demanded not only duties within certain relations, but the change of the relations, and the removal of the institutions. *According to the flesh*: In their outward and material relations, as opposed to their spiritual relations in which Christ is the master of them all. *With fear and trembling*: It is not so much fear of their masters that Paul enjoins on them, but dread of not coming up to the full standard of their duty (see 1 Cor. 2:3; 2 Cor. 7:15; Phil. 2:12). *In singleness of your heart*: That is, be what you appear to be; not apparently obedient, and really rebellious, but rendering a real service of both hand and heart. *As unto Christ*: They are really serving Christ in this obedience; since it is a divine law that pervades these human relations, and enjoins the duties that belong to them.

6. *Not with eyerservice, as men-pleasers* ("Not in the way of eyerservice," Rev. Ver.): Not following the master's eye, so as to work when that is on them, and lay off

Christ, doing the will of God from the heart;

7 With good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men:

8 Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether *he be* bond or free.

9 And, ye masters, do the same things unto them, forbearing threatening: knowing that your Master also is in heaven; neither is there respect of persons with him.

10 Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.

11 Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

7 *1 heart; with good will doing service, as unto the Lord, and not unto men: knowing that whatsoever good thing each one doeth, the same shall he receive again from the Lord, whether *he be* bond or free.* And, ye *2 masters, do the same things unto them, and forbear threatening; knowing that both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no respect of persons with him.*

10 *3 Finally, *4 be* strong in the Lord, and in the strength of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For our wrestling is*

¹ Gr. *soul.* ² Gr. *lords.* ³ Or, *From henceforth.* ⁴ Gr. *be made powerful.*

when his back is turned. By *men-pleasers* he means those who seek the favor of men, and not that favor of God which can come only from genuine goodness. Men can be deceived with the appearance of service. *But as the servants of Christ:* The slaves of Christ; they belong to him (see 1 Cor. 6: 19, 20). This is opposed to the *men-pleasers* of the preceding clause. *Doing the will of God from the heart:* This is the kind of service that comes from belonging to Christ. In the first place, it makes all human duty an obedience to the will of God, introducing this divine element into the human service; and, in the second place, it makes it to be done from the heart: the law becomes a law of liberty.

7. *With good will doing service:* They are not only to serve their masters, but to do it with a friendly disposition toward them, as if they were serving God and not men. It seems very evident that the apostle recognizes the possible hardship of this service, and would reconcile them to it by making them see the service of the Lord that lies hidden in it.

8. *Any man doeth* ("Each one doeth," Rev. Ver.). *Whether *he be* bond or free:* There is a difference in the allotments of this life between bond and free; but God takes account of nothing but the difference between good and evil, in his awards.

9. *Do the same things unto them:* They are to act toward their servants with the same good-will that the slaves are required to show toward them, and with the same recognition of the relation to Christ of all these human duties. *Forbearing threatening:* That is, as a means of urging them to their work, and employing instead the milder influences by which Christ wins men to obedience. *Knowing that your Master also is in heaven* ("both their Master and yours," Rev. Ver.). *Respect of persons:* Regarding for the outward distinctions between men, such as appearance, wealth, position, etc. This is substantially the same motive by which he influences the slaves (verse 8). As their humble position will not deprive them of their reward, so the master's superior position will not save him from the consequence of his evil action.

10. *Finally, my brethren, be strong:* Omit *my brethren* (Rev. Ver.). He closes these practical exhortations with directions as to where the source of their strength for the performance of them lay. They were to be strong (or become strong) not in themselves, but in the Lord. *And in the power of his might:* The word for *might* here denotes the strength resident in Christ; that for *power* denotes its power to accomplish something in men. How the apostle loves to dwell on this power of the Christ to accomplish things in his people!

11. *Put on the whole armour of God:* Truth, righteousness, faith, the word of

12 For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.

13 Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

not against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world-rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual *hosts* of wickedness in the heavenly places. Wherefore take up the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and, having done all, to stand.

God, and prayer (verses 14-18). The emphasis is on their putting on the whole armor, leaving nothing out, in so important a contest. It is God's armor, in the sense that God supplies it: he is the author of these graces. *The wiles of the devil:* It is not mere force, but cunning strategy, that we have to meet in the Devil.

12. *For we wrestle not* ("Our wrestling is not," Rev. Ver.): The word, however, comes to be used of any conflict; and here, certainly, the contest is not wrestling, but fighting with weapons. *Against flesh and blood:* This is a frequent designation of man in the New Testament, emphasizing his frailty—not against weak man. *Against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places:* Against dominions, against authorities, against the world-rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual *hosts* of wickedness in the heavenly places. These are all various ways of designating the demons who have their abode, according to Jewish tradition, in the air, and rule this evil world. Probably the *dominions* and *authorities* are different orders of demons, as in 1: 21 of angels. *The world-rulers of this darkness* denotes them, all together, as ruling over this world in the darkness of the present age. And *the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places* denotes them as a banded, organized host of evil, spirits of darkness, inhabiting the (lower) heavens. In chapter 2: 2, this habitation is said to be the air, and this is the stricter term; but the larger, more sounding word is used here to accord with the general description of the power arrayed against the Christian.

13. *In the evil day:* The day of conflict (see 1 Thess. 5: 1-8, 2 Thess. 2: 1-10). *And having done all, to stand:* This represents the state of things after the battle. They are to receive strength to withstand in the conflict; and so, having accomplished every thing that belongs to successful resistance, to finally beat off their enemies, and remain masters of the field.

LESSON VI.

CHRIST OUR EXAMPLE.—Phil. 2:5-16.

A GENERAL VIEW.—In the Epistles to the Ephesians (so called), to the Colossians, and to Philemon, Paul had cared for his churches in Asia Minor. Shortly afterwards his attention was drawn to Macedonia; and he wrote the letter to the Philippians, who constituted the first church founded by him in Europe. The occasion of the letter was the arrival of Epaphroditus, a prominent member of the church, with offerings to cheer the apostle in his captivity. In the performance of this service, Epaphroditus had contracted a dangerous disease; and, immediately on his recovery, he desired to hasten back, and relieve the anxiety of the church about him. Paul takes this occasion to send them a letter. He begins by assuring them that his imprisonment has been a means of furthering the gospel. Then he speaks of his coming trial, and of his belief, on the whole, that he would be acquitted, and come to them again. He exhorts them, therefore, to prepare for

his coming by a worthy life, and holds up before them the inspiring example of Christ. Then he speaks of the coming among them of Timothy and Epaphroditus. In the third chapter, apparently as an afterthought, he warns them against the Judaizers, and shows them how he had rejected all confidence in the flesh, in order to find all fulness in Christ. Then, coming again to the personal matters interrupted by this, he addresses certain brief exhortations to prominent members of the church, makes grateful mention of their gift, and so closes the most beautiful of all his epistles. The passage selected for our lesson is the one in which he holds up before them the example of Jesus, as an incitement to humility and love. It is a *locus classicus* in regard to the exalted being and station of our Lord.

5 Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:

6 Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God:

5 Have this mind in you, which 6 was also in Christ Jesus: who,
¹ being in the form of God, counted it not ² a prize to be on
7 an equality with God, but emp-

¹ Gr. *being originally*. ² Gr. *a thing to be grasped*.

NOTES.—5. *Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ*: The apostle has been exhorting them to humility and unselfishness; and now he urges them to have the mind of Christ in these matters.

6. *Who, being in the form of God*: This refers to the pre-existent state of Jesus, as it is contrasted with the *form of a servant*, and the *likeness of men*, which he assumed in his earthly state. By the *form of God* is meant the outward conditions and manifestations of the divine being,—his majesty and glory. God is an invisible, spiritual being; but he manifests himself in ways that express his inner nature, as the body of man manifests him. The idea is, therefore, that Christ had this same glory as the outward manifestation of his being. *Thought it not robbery to be equal with God*. This equality with God stands in contrast with the *form of a servant* and the *likeness of men*, just as the *being in the form of God* does; and therefore, probably, the two denote substantially the same thing. The equality with God consists in the possession of the divine glory and majesty, not as inward qualities, but as outward manifestations of the divine being. The connection would be expressed as follows: *Who, being in the form of God, thought this equality not robbery*. But now, what does this word translated *robbery* mean? The word itself means, properly, *an act of spoiling or plundering*; but by an interchange common among the two classes of words, though not verified in the case of this word, it may mean *booty* or *spoil*. If the former signification is given to it, then the meaning has been taken to be, *Since he was in the form of God, he thought it not robbery*. If the latter signification is taken, then the meaning has been supposed to be, *Though he was in the form of God, he did not think it spoil, or a thing to be grasped*. It is to be remembered, that the thing contrasted with this equality was the becoming a man, involving, as it did, the emptying of himself of this equality; and, in the circumstances, Jesus would have considered it a seizure to be on an equality with God, since, while it belonged to him originally, his work demanded now that it be given up. The other, then, is, for substance, the meaning; viz., that Jesus did not regard it as a thing to be seized by him. But this may be modified in two ways. First, the word that we are seeking to translate may be rendered *a matter of seizure*, instead of *a thing to be seized*. Jesus did not regard obtaining this equality as belonging to that class of things, and so would not seize it. And, secondly, it does not seem necessary to regard the participial clause—*being in the form of God*—as concessive, meaning *though he was in the form of God*: rather, having that equality, if it had become a matter of grasping for him to have it, he would for that reason refuse to degrade it. The meaning, then, is this: Jesus was in the form of God; but, when it came to be a matter of seizure or spoil for him to retain this equality with God, he refused to regard it as such, to contemplate it in that light.

7 But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:

8 And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

9 Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name;

10 That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of *things* in heaven, and *things* in earth, and *things* under the earth;

tied himself, taking the form of a ¹servant, ²being made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, becoming obedient *even* unto death, yea, the ⁹death of the cross. Wherefore also, God highly exalted him, and gave unto him the name ¹⁰which is above every name; that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of *things* in heaven, and *things* on earth, and ³*things* ¹¹under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus

¹ Gr. *bondservant*. ² Gr. *becoming in*. ³ Or, *things of the world below*.

7. But made himself of no reputation ("But emptied himself," Rev. Ver.): He emptied himself of this equality, consisting in the possession of the divine glory. **And took upon him the form of a servant** ("Taking the form of a servant," Rev. Ver.): It denotes that in which the emptying consists; viz., the exchange of the divine form of being for that of a servant of God. Notice how exact the contrast is between equality with God, and the form of a servant. **And was made in the likeness of men** ("Being made in the likeness of men," Rev. Ver.): This denotes that in which the assumption of the form of a servant consists,—men being the bond-servants of God. The term *likeness of men* does not imply the lack of reality in his humanity, but simply that this apparent nature did not exhaust the reality of his being. He was not simply a man, but the Son of God become man.

8. And being found in fashion as a man: The word translated *fashion* denotes not merely the form, but every thing belonging to the outward condition,—the speech, action, manner of life, needs and their supply, and so on. **He humbled himself:** The discourse changes here from the assumption of humanity by Jesus to what he did as a man. Being in the form of God, he became man; and now, having become man, he humbled himself. **And became obedient** ("Becoming obedient," Rev. Ver.): It denotes that in which the humiliation consists. Having become man, he did not refuse the humble state of obedience that belongs to man. His position as a man was that of a bond-servant of God, and he did not refuse obedience to his master. **Unto death:** This denotes the degree of obedience rendered by him. He found that obedience involved death, and he did not refuse even that. **Even the death of the cross:** Not only death, but a humiliating and painful death, reserved for slaves and the lowest criminals.

9. Wherefore also God highly exalted him (Rev. Ver.): There was not only a humiliation, but also an exaltation, and an exaltation arising from the humiliation. Jesus became, through this humbling of himself, the true Messianic king, ruling in the hearts and over the spirits of men. The exaltation has its outward form in the ascension and enthronement of our Lord, but its reality in the ascendancy which his self-sacrificing love gives him over the human heart and conscience. See Matt. 22:44; 23:10-12; Luke 17:21; 22:24-30; 24:26, 46, 47; John 12:23-28, 31-33; 13:12-18, 31, 32; 18:37; Eph. 1:20-23; 4:8-10; Heb. 2:9 (Rev. Ver.); 1 Peter 3:18-22. **And given him a name which is above every name** ("Gave unto him the name," Rev. Ver.): He has made the name of Jesus to be the most exalted name, surrounded it with the attributes of suffering and the glories of divine kingship, and lifted it to the highest place.

10. That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow ("In the name," Rev. Ver.): See Isa. 45:23; Rom. 14:11. The meaning is not, that at the mention of his name every knee should bow, but that the name itself should be the cause of their

11 And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ *is* Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

12 Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.

13 For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of *his* good pleasure.

14 Do all things without murmurings and disputings:

Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

12 So then, my beloved, even as ye have always obeyed, not ¹as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear

13 and trembling; for it is God which worketh in you both to will and to work, for his good

14 pleasure. Do all things without murmurings and disputings;

15 that ye may be blameless and harmless, children of God with-

¹ Some ancient authorities omit *as*.

kneeling. The bending of the knees is the sign of worship. The passage, taken by itself, might mean that this worship was to be rendered to God, in the name of Jesus; but the purpose of the passage, which is to exalt Jesus, points conclusively to the other meaning, that it is to be given to Jesus himself. *Of things in heaven*: Of beings in heaven. Knees belong to beings. The heavenly beings are angels, the earthly beings men, and the beings of the under-world the dead. See Eph. 3: 10; 4: 9. This universal adoration belonged to Jesus by virtue of his being in the form of God; but it becomes his only by the exhibition of his suffering love. It is the hearts of men that worship, and the spirits of men that bow; and these Jesus made his own, not by majesty, but by love. And, given a sinful world, even angels might have withheld a perfect worship, if Jesus had withheld a perfect love.

11. *That Jesus Christ is Lord*: This is the common title given to Jesus. See Eph. 4: 5; Rom. 10: 9; 2 Cor. 4: 5 (Rev. Ver.). Here, again, the lordship belongs to him, but its confession is won by his unselfish love. *To the glory of God the Father*: This confession is to the glory of God, because of the relation between himself and Jesus. It is the acknowledgment of one who was in his image, who did his work, and whom he himself appointed Lord. See Heb. 1: 1-3; Eph. 1: 20-23; John 17: 1-6.

12. *Wherefore*: In view of this example of Christ. As he denied himself to obtain such rewards, so they are exhorted to diligence in working out their salvation. *Not as in my presence only*: Not as if it were something to be done in his presence only. *But now much more in my absence*: When they are without his presence and aid, they must be specially careful of their own salvation. Both these clauses belong to the exhortation, *work out*, etc. *Work out your own salvation*: Carry it through, complete it. Their own salvation is not contrasted with one that some one else is to work out for them, but with the glory that Christ obtained for himself. *Work out your salvation, as he his exaltation*. *With fear and trembling*: Lest you may fail. Paul regarded their complete salvation as something belonging to the future, and dependent in a measure on their own exertions. See Rom. 2: 5-10 (specially verse 7); 8: 13, 23-25; 1 Cor. 9: 22-27; Phil. 3: 12-14.

13. *For it is God which worketh in you*: An encouragement for them to work strenuously for this great object. They do it under a divine impulse; there is one working in them, and that one is God. *Both to will and to do* ("To work," Rev. Ver.): The two sides of action—the inward purpose, and the outward fulfilment of it—are both wrought by God. *For his good pleasure*: To carry out his gracious purpose, his purpose to save us. It belongs with the verb *worketh*.

14. *Do all things without murmurings and disputings*: Probably against God; without murmuring against what he lays upon them, or inward debates as to its reasonableness.

15 That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world;

16 Holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain.

out blemish in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom ye are seen
16 as ¹lights in the world, holding forth the word of life; that I may have whereof to glory in the day of Christ, that I did not run in vain neither labour in vain.

¹ Gr. *luminaries*.

15. *That ye may be blameless and harmless*: And guileless. They both denote purity; the former in the estimation of men, the latter in their character. *Without rebuke* ("Without blemish," Rev. Ver.). *A crooked and perverse nation* ("Generation," Rev. Ver.): *Ye shine* ("Ye are seen," Rev. Ver.).

16. *Holding forth the word of life*: This denotes that by virtue of which they are lights or luminaries. They present to men, both in action and speech, the word of life, the essence of which is light. *That I may rejoice* ("May have whereof to glory," Rev. Ver.): This is the purpose for which he would have them blameless. He would have their spotless lives to show as a proof that his work was of a kind that bears fruit.

LESSON VII.

CHRISTIAN CONTENTMENT.—Phil. 4:4-13.

A GENERAL VIEW.—The Apostle Paul has been regarded rightfully as the expounder of Christian doctrine. No one has explored more deeply the difficulties and mysteries of the truth, nor presented more clearly its meanings and connections, than the apostle of the Gentiles. But he is also the apostle of the Christian life. He sees the meaning of the Christ not only in the realm of truth, but also in the life of man. Being himself a true man, built on a large pattern, earnest and intense in whatever he undertook, he knew sympathetically, he understood the like-minded Christ, whom yet he knew that he followed afar off. It is a rare privilege to know what life seemed to a man like Paul, as interpreted by the man Christ Jesus. What a picture he draws for us here, of a joyful, gentle life, free from care, and full of an unspeakable peace; mindful of truth, honor, right, purity, and whatever brings beauty and good report to men; in which there blooms the flower of an unselfish care for others, and which is yet not dependent on others, but sufficient unto itself, having learned the secret how to live in both abundance and want; and which finally sees all the possibilities of life opened to it through the Christ. And yet this is largely an unconscious, and certainly a spontaneous beauty. For Paul was not drawing a picture: he was simply exhorting the Philippian Christians to do their duty, and thanking them for their generosity.

4 Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice.

4 ¹Rejoice in the Lord alway: 5 again I will say, ¹Rejoice. Let

¹ Or, *Farewell*.

NOTES.—4. *Rejoice in the Lord alway*: *In the Lord* does not denote the object of their rejoicing, as when he says, *Trust in the Lord, Have faith in him*; but it denotes that this, like every thing else in their lives, is to get its character from their vital union with the Lord. It is to be a Christian joy (see 2: 29; 1: 8). *Again I will say* (Rev. Ver.): It will bear repeating.

5 Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord *is* at hand.

6 Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.

7 And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

8 Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.

your ¹ forbearance be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand. In nothing be anxious; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus.

8 Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are ²honourable, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are ³of good report; if

¹ Or, *gentleness*. ² Gr. *reverend*. ³ Or, *gracious*.

5. *Let your moderation be known unto all men* ("Forbearance," Rev. Ver.): It is the opposite of harshness and strictness in judgment, and of contentiousness, considering not only the wrong done, but the alleviating circumstances. *Clemency* or *gentleness* perhaps expresses the idea. (See 1 Tim. 3: 3; Tit. 3: 2; Jas. 3: 17; 1 Pet. 2: 18, in all of which the Revised Version translates the adjective, *gentle*.) *The Lord is at hand*: This is an expression of the expectation, common to all the New-Testament writers, that the coming of the Lord was near (see 1 Cor. 8: 29, *sq.*; 1 Thess. 4: 15-17; 2 Thess. 2: 1-12 (Rev. Ver.) Jas. 5: 7, 9; Rev. 22: 7, 20.) It is used here to enforce these practical injunctions, as being the Lord's commands.

6. *Be careful for nothing*: Care comes from doubt. Men not only do their work in the world, but they are anxious about its results: they are troubled lest things should not go right. This doubting care Paul forbids. *With thanksgiving*: This is put in because prayer itself may be anxious and querulous, and he would have it glad and thankful. It is to be no attempt to make God gracious, but a thankful recognition that he is gracious. *Let your requests be made known unto God*: Instead of anxiety, there is to be prayer, a committing of all cares to God.

7. *The peace of God*: The peace that comes from him, that he bestows; the rest and quietness that are opposed to the anxiety deprecated by Paul. *Which passeth all understanding*: Which surpasseth every intelligence. It may mean, as our version renders it, that it is beyond conception; but it seems more apposite to make it denote the superiority of this peace over the mind of man, as having a power that this does not have to raise above cares and troubles. This introduces the idea that the heart is guarded by a stronger power. *Shall keep* ("Shall guard," Rev. Ver.): It is a divine sentinel, guarding the soul against all evil and disturbing influences. *Your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus* ("And your thoughts in Christ Jesus," Rev. Ver.): The heart, which in the New Testament is the whole inner man, and the thoughts coming from it. *In Christ Jesus* denotes that in which this peace of God lives, and does its work. It is in Jesus that the revelation of God as a being to be utterly trusted reaches men.

8. *Whatsoever things are honest* ("Honorable," Rev. Ver.): In the margin the revisers give *reverend* as the meaning of the Greek word. It is applied to the gods as revered by men, to men who for any reason are objects of reverence, and to things that are worthy of reverence. *Noble* is the best rendering of the spirit of the word. *Just*: Right. The word has both meanings, but it is in favor of the broader meaning, that the apostle is here enumerating not special virtues, but different aspects of virtue,—its conformity to truth,

9 Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you.

10 But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at the last your care of me hath flourished again; wherein ye were also careful, but ye lacked opportunity.

11 Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.

12 I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every-

there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, ¹ think on these 9 things. The things which ye both learned and received and heard and saw in me, these things do: and the God of peace shall be with you.

10 But I ² rejoice in the Lord greatly, that now at length ye have revived your thought for me; ³ wherein ye did indeed take thought, but ye lacked opportunity.

11 Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therein 12 to be content. I know how to

¹ Gr. *take account of*. ² Gr. *rejoiced*. ³ Or, *seeing that*.

its nobility, its purity, and here its righteousness. *Pure*: Not simply chaste, but free from any stain. *Lovely*: The things that men love. The attractiveness of virtue is a distinctively Christian idea. *Of good report*: This meaning seems doubtful. Things that sound well in the ears, that seem to be of good omen, and to bring good fortune, are meant more probably. *If there be any virtue, and if there be any praise*: This is not an injunction in the name of virtue and praise to consider these things; but he sums up all these virtues, and any others, in this clause, which means, *Whatever virtue, and whatever praise belonging to virtue, there is*. *Think on these things*: He wishes them to practise these things, but to come to the practice through reflection on their excellence.

9. *Those things which ye have both learned*: The things also which ye learned. He wishes to approach this lesson from another side; and, in order that they may understand definitely what things he means, he tells them to do what they have learned from his teaching and example. *And received*: In the sense of *accepted* (see John 1: 11; 1 Cor. 15: 1). *And heard, and seen in me, do* ("And saw in me, these things do," Rev. Ver.): These last two verbs relate to the apostle's example, and in its two parts, of speech and action. The apparent egotism of such an appeal is lessened greatly by the fact that Christianity introduced a new and revolutionary ethics, based on love, making instruction, at first, even more necessary than appeal, and that for this purpose example is necessary, and the use of it in instruction. *And the God of peace shall be with you*: This is substantially the same promise as in verse 7. There it is promised as the result of trust, and here of virtuous action. It is the pure in heart who see God.

10. *But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly*: In the Lord means the same as in verse 4. *Now at the last* ("Now at length," Rev. Ver.) *Your care of me hath flourished again*: You flourished again to care for my interest: since you did indeed care, but were not prospered. He does not intimate that they had ever ceased to think of his interest, but that they had not been in condition to do any thing about it. He was glad that they flourished, or prospered, again sufficiently to care for his interest; knowing, as he did, that their previous failure had been owing to lack of prosperity, and not of thought.

11. *Not that I speak in respect of want*: Because of want, as if his great joy had been on account of the need which their gift supplied. *To be content*: Self-sufficing, not dependent on others. He has that within himself which makes him independent of external aid. This is far more apposite than the idea of mere contentment.

12. *I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound*: To be brought low—not in spirit, but in outward condition—by poverty, need, and the like.

where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need.

13 I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.

be abased, and I know also how to abound: in every thing and in all things have I learned the secret both to be filled and to be hungry, both to abound and to be in want. I can do all things in him that strengtheneth me.

Alike abundance and poverty, he is sufficient for. He has learned the art of both, so that he is not depressed by one, nor puffed up by the other. *Everywhere and in all things* ("In every thing and in all things," Rev. Ver.): It is simply a strong statement, in which the second part adds very little to the first, except by essential repetition. *I am instructed* ("Have I learned the secret," Rev. Ver.): Been initiated into the mysteries of.

13. *I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me* ("In him that," Rev. Ver.): Here he sums up what he has been saying, and shows the secret of his independence of outward things. He has learned the secret of poverty and riches, but not only this,—he has strength for any thing; and the secret of this strength is his union with Christ, who gives him power.

LESSON VIII.

THE FAITHFUL SAYING.—1 Tim. 1:15-2:6.

A GENERAL VIEW.—Criticism has been busy with the Pastoral Epistles, as the letters to Timothy and Titus are called; and it has succeeded in establishing some valid objections to their Pauline authorship. It is not necessary for us to discuss these questions. We can assume, in company with most scholars, that they are genuine productions; and, if they are, then we are led to interesting conclusions. In the first place, their evidence is conclusive that Paul was released from his first imprisonment, and went to Ephesus, Troas, Miletus, Macedonia, and Crete, resuming his apostolic work, and paying special attention to the organization and settlement of these churches, preparatory to his final departure from them. Secondly, it appears that, after some years, he was imprisoned in Rome a second time, and was finally beheaded,—tradition says in A.D. 68. This first Epistle to Timothy, and the Epistle to Titus, were written probably during the period between his first and second imprisonment. Timothy, to whom this letter was written, was the constant attendant and helper of the apostle from the beginning of the second missionary journey. He was assigned by the apostle to detached service in Berea (Acts 17: 14, *sqq.*; Thessalonica, 1 Thess. 3: 2; Corinth, 1 Cor. 4: 17; 16: 10; and Ephesus, 1 Tim. 1: 3). The rest of the time he was probably in Paul's company. The first epistle was written with two objects. Paul had left Timothy in charge of the church at Ephesus: and his first object in this letter was to re-enforce the directions that he had given him in regard to the false teachers who were undermining the faith of the church; and his second purpose was to instruct him in regard to the character and qualifications of those who held office in the church, and the conduct of the service at the meetings of the church. Our lesson begins in the midst of a contrast between the false teachings alluded to and the glorious gospel, and ends with an exhortation in regard to the prayers to be made in the assemblies of the church.

15 This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.

15 Faithful is the saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am

NOTES.—15. Paul has been speaking of love as the end of the commandment of the gospel, and of the insistence on the Mosaic law which characterized the false teachers in

16 Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting.

17 Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen.

18 This charge I commit unto thee, son Timothy, according to the prophecies which went before on thee, that thou by them mightest war a good warfare;

16 chief: howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me as chief might Jesus Christ shew forth all his longsuffering, for an ensample of them which should hereafter believe on him unto eternal life.

17 Now unto the King ¹ eternal, incorruptible, invisible, the only God, be honour and glory ² for ever and ever. Amen.

18 This charge I commit unto thee, my child Timothy, according to the prophecies which ³ went before on thee, that by them thou mayest war the good warfare;

¹ Gr. of the ages. ² Gr. unto the ages of the ages. ³ Or, led the way to thee.

Ephesus in distinction from this law of love; and so he is led to speak of his own experience of the gospel, and of its power to secure forgiveness and faith and love. It is in this last section that we begin. *Faithful is the saying* (Rev. Ver.): That is, worthy of belief. *And worthy of all acceptance*: The acceptance here is substantially the same as the *belief* implied in the preceding; but the addition to the thought is in the word *all*. The belief that it is worthy to receive is full and unhesitating. *That Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners*: The emphasis is on the saving of sinners. This is the lesson that Paul's experience had taught him, in opposition to all self-righteousness, that the work of Jesus was a saving work, a work of grace, and implied the sinfulness of men. *Of whom I am chief*: It had saved him, the chief of sinners, and hence no sinner need fear. But probably Paul's thought did not stop here. He was thinking of the result of his endeavor to be self-righteous, that it had left him the chief of sinners.

16. *Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy*: He has spoken before (verse 13) of the extenuating circumstance of his ignorance, as a reason of his obtaining mercy. Now he speaks of the purpose that God had in view in his particular case. *Howbeit*: In spite of the fact that he was the chief of sinners. *That in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all longsuffering* ("all his longsuffering," Rev. Ver.): It was not merely as an individual sinner that God had mercy on him, but as a type of what his grace could do, the first in whom God had been called on to display all his patience. The emphasis comes on the word *all*. *For a pattern to them* ("For an ensample of them," Rev. Ver.): He was to be a type of believers; since in him first all the patience of the Christ was shown, leaving none of it to conjecture, or to be filled out from some later experience. *Longsuffering*: The patience that forbears to follow up sin with an immediate judgment, and gives time for repentance.

17. *Unto the King eternal* ("King of the ages," Rev. Ver., margin): Probably the meaning *eternal* belongs only to the phrases *forever*, and *from the beginning*, in which this word occurs. The ages are those of the world's history. *Immortal* ("Incorruptible," Rev. Ver.): The impossibility of decay in God is meant. *The only wise God*: Omit *wise* (Rev. Ver.) *Be honour and glory for ever*: The doxology is called forth by the description of the divine grace.

18. *This charge I commit unto thee*; viz., *That thou war the good warfare*. The latter clause denotes the charge itself, and not the purpose of it. *According to the prophecies which went before on thee*: Concerning thee. These prophecies are represented as preceding his official career. They were divine intimations, given through some inspired man, of his fitness for his office. *By them*: In them. Within the lines marked out by these prophecies. *The good warfare*: Paul uses this term not only of Timothy's personal strife against sin, but of his strife as a Christian leader against error.

19 Holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck:

20 Of whom is Hymenæus and Alexander; whom I have delivered unto Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme.

1 I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men;

2 For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.

3 For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour;

4 Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.

19 holding faith and a good conscience; which some having thrust from them made shipwreck concerning the faith: of whom is Hymenæus and Alexander; whom I delivered unto Satan, that they might be taught not to blaspheme.

1 I exhort therefore, first of all,

1 that supplications, prayers, intercessions, thanksgivings, be made for all men; for kings and all that are in high place; that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and gravity.

2 This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour;

3 who will that all men should be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, one mediator

¹ Gr. to make supplications, etc.

19. *Holding faith, and a good conscience*: This keeping in possession faith and a good conscience is given as the manner in which he is to war the good warfare. Faith is his belief in Christ, which is the condition of all Christian warfare, its inspiration; and a good conscience is that consciousness of rectitude which is the fruit of faith, without which a man's profession and defence of the truth are powerless. The emphasis of a good conscience in connection with faith is characteristic of this epistle. *Which some having put away* ("Having thrust from them," Rev. Ver.): They not merely lost it, but recklessly thrust it away. *Made shipwreck concerning the faith* (Rev. Ver.): In the matter of faith. If a man does not apply his faith to his conduct, so as to secure rectitude in that, he makes shipwreck of his faith.

20. *Hymenæus and Alexander*: The former is probably the same as in 2 Tim. 2: 17. Whether Alexander is the same mentioned in 2 Tim. 4: 14, we cannot tell. *I delivered unto Satan*: Turned them out of the church into the world ruled by Satan (see 1 Cor. 5: 5). Their unbelief resulted in blasphemy.

2: 1. *I exhort therefore, first of all*: His general exhortation is, that Timothy war the good warfare; that is, fulfil his office in charge of the church. Coming now to particulars under that, his first exhortation in regard to the conduct of the church service is that prayers be offered for all men. The first three words for prayers are simply general designations of the act. *Thanksgivings* denotes, of course, a distinctive part of prayer. *For all men*: This belongs to all the preceding words, not simply to *thanksgivings*.

2. *For kings, and for all that are in authority* ("In high place," Rev. Ver.). *That we may lead a quiet and peaceable life*: This is the reason why kings are to be prayed for specially,—that through their rule the lawless and disturbing elements of society may be repressed, and men may enjoy a quiet life. *In all godliness and honesty*: And dignity. The first denotes the religious life, the worshshipping life. The second is the life worthy of honor (see on Phil. 4: 8, under the word *honest*, Lesson VII.). This is a subordinate idea, the emphasis being on the idea of quietness. *That we may lead our religious and worthy life in quietness*, is the meaning.

3. *For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour*: Omit *for* (Rev. Ver.): This refers to the prayer for all men. God is designated here as our Saviour, since it is in this character that the prayer for all men is pleasing to him.

4. *Who will have all men to be saved*: Who desireth all men to be saved. This

Lesson IX. PAUL'S CHARGE TO TIMOTHY. 2 Tim. 3:14-4:8.

5 For *there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;*

6 Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.

also between God and men, *himself man, Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all;* the testimony to be borne in its own times.

desire of God is hindered by the unbelief of men (see 1 Tim. 4: 10). This desire of God for the salvation of all men makes prayer for all men acceptable.

5. **For there is one God:** This unity of God, the fact that there is one God of all men, confirms the preceding statement that God desires all men to be saved. A desire that only some should be saved would argue a difference, an incredible distinction, in the Godhead. He would be one thing to some men, and another to others. **One mediator between God and men:** One who comes from God to men, and forms the medium of communication between them, as Moses in the matter of the law (Gal. 3: 19). **The man** ("Himself man," Rev. Ver.). The humanity of Jesus is the ground of his mediatorship, removing, as it did, the difficulty of communication between God and man. This one Mediator removes still farther the possibility of a distinction among men in God's thought.

6. **Who gave himself a ransom for all:** Here is further testimony to God's desire to save all,—that the Mediator gave himself as a ransom for all. Men were in captivity to sin, and the price paid for their ransom was what Christ suffered. He gave himself in sacrifice for their redemption. **To be testified in due time:** Literally, this means *the testimony to its own times;* and the explanation is to be gathered from that, Christ's giving himself a ransom for all is God's witness to his desire for men, and shows conclusively that the desire was to save them all. This testimony was reserved for its own time (see 2 Tim. 1: 10; Tit. 1: 3).

LESSON IX.

PAUL'S CHARGE TO TIMOTHY.—2 Tim. 3:14-4:8.

A GENERAL VIEW.—This Epistle was written, as appears from 4: 6-8, shortly before the apostle's final trial, which resulted in his execution; that is, about the year 67 A.D. The immediate occasion of the letter is his desire to see Timothy, whom he exhorts to come to him speedily; and, at the same time, he makes it a farewell letter of instructions, in view of his own departure, and of the alarming increase of errors and evils in the church at Ephesus. Our lesson begins with an exhortation to Timothy to abide in the teachings of his youth, in contrast with the departures of the false teachers, and in imitation of the steadfastness of Paul; and then follows an exhortation to teach these things unceasingly and unflinchingly, in view of the evil time coming.

14 But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them;

14 But abide thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of ¹whom thou hast learned

¹ Gr. *what persons.*

NOTES.—14. **But abide thou** (Rev. Ver.): In contrast with the progress in evil of the false teachers (verse 13). **And hast been assured of:** Adds to the idea of *learning* the conviction of the truth of what is learned. **Knowing of whom thou hast learned them:** This is given as a reason why he should abide in them. *Whom* is plural; and the persons meant are probably his mother Eunice and his grandmother Lois, since the instruction began in his infancy (see 1: 5; 3: 15).

15 And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

16 All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:

17 That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom;

2 Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove,

15 them; and that from a babe thou hast known the sacred writings which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

16 ¹Every scripture inspired of God is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for ²instruction which is in righteousness: that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work.

I ³I charge thee in the sight of God, and of Christ Jesus, who shall judge the quick and the dead, and by his appearing ²and his kingdom; preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; ⁴reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering

¹ Or, Every scripture is inspired of God, and profitable. ² Or, discipline. ³ Or, I testify, in the sight . . . dead, both of his appearing, etc. ⁴ Or, bring to the proof.

15. *And that from a child* ("from a babe," Rev. Ver.). *Thou hast known the holy scriptures*: Thou knowest the sacred writings. Generally, the Scriptures are described as holy, with reference to the character of their teachings; but here as sacred, distinguished from secular and common writings. *Wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus*: Omit *which is*. The Scriptures give the knowledge and wisdom necessary to salvation, but this result is contingent on their faith in Jesus.

16. *All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable* ("Every scripture inspired of God is also profitable," Rev. Ver.): Grammatically, both interpretations are equally good, but the connection of thought rather favors the translation of the revisers, since the attention is directed to the practical uses of the Scriptures; and it is probable that the inspiration would be assumed as a ground of this, rather than stated as a co-ordinate fact. The Scriptures are made up of separate writings, and *every scripture* refers to these. The word for *inspired of God* described the Scriptures as breathed upon by God, filled with a divine afflatus. The mere proceeding from God is not the idea, but the possession of an inspiration coming from him. *Doctrine* ("teaching," Rev. Ver.): The act, and not the thing taught, is denoted. *For correction*: Not in the sense of chastisement, but of reformation. *For instruction*: For training.

17. *The man of God*: Is not here the religious teacher, as the whole statement is in regard to the general use of scripture to make wise unto salvation. *Thoroughly furnished unto all good works* ("every good work," Rev. Ver.): The words *perfect* and *thoroughly furnished* mean *ready* and *made completely ready*, with, of course, the idea of completeness or perfectness implied. The verse denotes the purpose of these uses of Scripture.

1. *I charge thee therefore*: Omit *therefore* (Rev. Ver.). *And the Lord Jesus Christ*: And Christ Jesus. *Who shall judge the quick and the dead*: Who is to judge the living and the dead. This is inserted in order to bring the judgment before Timothy as an incitement to fulfil the charge. By the *living and the dead*, he means those already departed, and those left alive at that time. *At his appearing and his kingdom* ("and by his appearing and his kingdom," Rev. Ver.): It is that by which he adjures him. The two things are connected, but distinct,—by his appearing, and the kingdom that he will then establish.

2. *Preach the word*: Of God. Not the written word, since the gospel was not yet

rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.

3 For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears;

4 And they shall turn away *their* ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.

5 But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry.

3 and teaching. For the time will come when they will not endure the ¹sound ²doctrine; but, having itching ears, will heap to themselves teachers after their 4 own lusts; and will turn away their ears from the truth, and 5 turn aside unto fables. But be thou sober in all things, suffer hardship, do the work of an evangelist, fulfil thy ministry. 6 For I am already being ³offered, and the time of my departure is 7 come. I have fought the good

¹ Gr. *healthful*. ² Or, *teaching*. ³ Gr. *poured out as a drink-offering*.

current in writing, but the gospel preached by Paul and others. The word for *preaching* here means to *proclaim as a herald*. *Be instant*: Or urgent. *In season, out of season*: Not waiting for an opportunity, but at all times. *Reprove, rebuke, exhort*: The various ways in which the word that he preaches is to be applied to individuals. *Reprove* and *rebuke* are different sides of the same thing. The former denotes the act of convicting, of showing another to be in the wrong; the latter adds the idea of displeasure. *With all longsuffering and teaching* (Rev. Ver.): Literally, *In all*, denoting the element in which, and not the means or accompaniment with which, the act is performed. These two things are very important modifiers of the thought. While the reproof was to be urgent, it was to be administered in all patience; and while reproof and exhortation were to be the objects, it was to be done not in the way of mere impression and appeal, but of instruction. The whole thing was to be bathed in an atmosphere of patience and instruction.

3. *For the time will come*: Reason for this urgency. The time meant is the last times, which the apostle thinks to be imminent (see chapter 3: 1 *sqq.*; 1 Tim. 4: 1 *sqq.*; and compare 3: 5-9). *Sound doctrine*: Healthful teaching which has nothing impure or sickly about it. *But, having itching ears, will heap to themselves teachers after their own lusts* (Rev. Ver.): By *itching ears* are meant ears that itch for pleasant things to tickle them. The emphasis is on *after their own lusts*, which stands opposed to a teaching according to God's will. They want teachers to please them, instead of those that teach a wholesome, if exacting, doctrine. *Will heap to themselves*: A strong word, denoting them as gathering a crowd of such teachers about them.

4. *And turn aside unto fables* (Rev. Ver.). (See 1 Tim. 4: 7; 2 Tim. 4: 4; Tit. 1: 14.) The fables, or myths, referred to are probably the beginnings of Gnostic speculations in regard to the origins of things. This was the special form of error that the apostle saw looming up in his Asiatic churches.

5. *But watch thou* ("be thou sober," Rev. Ver.): Do not be intoxicated by these things, but keep your head clear. *Endure afflictions* ("suffer hardship," Rev. Ver.): That is, the hardship attendant on his steadfastness; not giving way to this current of things in the church (see chapters 1: 8; 2: 3; 3: 12). *Of an evangelist*: One who went about among the churches preaching the gospel, and so distinguished from a pastor or elder or other officer of a local church. Timothy had the charge of the church at Ephesus just at this time, but his regular work was that of an evangelist. *Make full proof of thy ministry* ("fulfil thy ministry," Rev. Ver.): *Ministry* is here the technical word for the office of a deacon; but its more common meaning is *service*, and it seems evident that this is the sense intended here, as Timothy's work was not that of a local church officer. It is not confined even to his evangelistic work, but includes his whole service of Jesus.

6 For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand.

7 I have fought a good fight, I have finished *my* course, I have kept the faith:

8 Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.

fight, I have finished the course, 8 I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give to me at that day; and not only to me, but also to all them that have loved his appearing.

6. *For I am now ready to be offered*: For I am already being poured out; viz., as a drink-offering. It may be mere fancy that causes the apostle to choose this instead of the more ordinary word for sacrifice. But as the drink-offering, forming a part of the meat-offering, usually followed the burnt-offering, it may be chosen as indicating that the apostle's death made the close of a life of sacrifice; as if he said, "I am now poured out, and so the sacrifice ends." The present tense is used to denote in a strong way the imminence of the event,—the beginning of the end has come. *The time of my departure is at hand* ("is come," Rev. Ver.): Here the same remarks on the use of the tense apply.

7. *I have fought a good fight* ("the good fight," Rev. Ver.): Both the verb and the noun are used of the contests in the public games, such as wrestling, boxing, gladiatorial conflicts, and the like. The severity and strenuousness of these made them fit representations of the conflict of the Christian with sin. *I have finished my course*: I have finished the race. Here again the reference is to the foot-races, which formed an important part of the games (see Phil. 3: 13, 14). It represents the Christian life as having a goal and a prize. *I have kept the faith*: The figures are dropped now, and the result of these conflicts is literally stated. He has guarded his faith in Christ against all attacks.

8. *The crown of righteousness* (Rev. Ver.): The figure of the games is kept up still, the reference being to the wreaths with which the victors were crowned. Whether the righteousness is that for which the crown is bestowed, or the crown itself, cannot be determined by the language; but it is more consonant with Paul's thought, to take the righteousness as the ground of the award, and eternal life as the prize awarded (see Rom. 2: 6-10). *The Lord*: Jesus, as appears from the reference to his coming, and from the general New-Testament representation of him as the Judge. *The righteous judge*: The one therefore who will not bestow the prize on the unrighteous, nor withhold it from the righteous. *That love his appearing* ("have loved," Rev. Ver.): The appearance meant is the second coming, as appears from the context (see also verse 1). This coming of the Lord is that on which the early Christians set their affections.

LESSON X.

GOD'S MESSAGE BY HIS SON.—*Heb. 1:1-8; 2:1-4.*

A GENERAL VIEW.—In the first place, it is as certain as any question of authorship can be made, that Paul is not the author of this epistle. Every thing, except an unsupported tradition, is against it. On the other hand, while it is not at all certain, it is the most reasonable hypothesis, that Apollos did write it. It is an epistle addressed to Jews in some unknown place, vindicating the superiority of the new covenant over the old, in order to prevent their relapse into Judaism. Inasmuch as it was the boast of the Jews, that the law was given through angels, the author establishes, first, the superiority of Jesus, the Mediator of the new covenant, over them. Then, following out the same general idea, he shows his superiority to Moses, to Joshua, and to Aaron. This brings him to the high-priestly office of Jesus; and he shows that he is a royal and eternal priest, after the order of Melchizedek, having in his person, in the fact that he ministers in a heavenly sanctuary, and in the sacrifice that he offers, a threefold superiority to the Levitical priesthood. Then he shows that faith was the inspiring principle of the lives of saints under the old covenant, the same as under the new covenant; but that they did not receive the promises in which they placed their faith, that being reserved for the saints under the new covenant. And yet they endured persecutions; and he incites those who occupy the surer ground of the new covenant not to faint under them (chapter 11: 12). The last chapter contains practical conclusions. Our lesson belongs to the first part, in which the author compares Christ to the angels.

1 God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets,

2 Hath in these last days spoken unto us by *his* Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds;

1 God, having of old time spoken unto the fathers in the prophets by divers portions and in divers 2 manners, hath at the end of these days spoken unto us in ¹*his* Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, through whom also he 3 made the ² worlds; who being

¹ Gr. *a* Son. ² Gr. ages.

NOTES.—1. *God, having of old time spoken unto the fathers in the prophets in many parts and in many ways:* So, substantially, the Revised Version. The time denoted is not only *past time*, but *ancient time*—long past. The prophetic line closed with Malachi, 400 B.C.; and while the revelation did come at different times, that is not the statement, but that it was divided into many parts. The *many ways* are the different forms of communication, such as dreams, visions, inward enlightenment, and direct speech. *In the prophets:* Since it was the Spirit dwelling in them that spoke. This is part of the contrast between the old and new covenants,—that the former was not one complete revelation, but made up of a number of incomplete parts; the successive revelations being necessary on account of this incompleteness.

2. *In these last days* (“At the end of these days,” Rev. Ver.): The expression arises from the view of the Messianic *period*, as the closing period of the present state of things, and of the near approach of the final era, to be inaugurated at the second coming of our Lord. *By his Son* (“In a Son,” Rev. Ver., margin): The absence of the article or possessive in the Greek, brings out more fully this fact of sonship as a characteristic mark, over against the more prophetic character of those who have before spoken. What God says through a Son, he can say to better advantage than what he says through a mere prophet. The completeness of the utterance depends on the person through whom it is

3 Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;

4 Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.

5 For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee? And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son?

the effulgence of his glory, and
1 the very image of his substance, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had made purification of sins, sat down on the right hand of the

4 Majesty on high; having become by so much better than the angels, as he hath inherited a more excellent name than they. For unto which of the angels said he at any time,

Thou art my Son,

5 This day have I begotten thee? and again,

I will be to him a Father,

¹ Or, *the impress of his substance.*

made. *Whom he hath appointed heir of all things:* This was a position belonging to the Son, not merely from his Messianic office, but from his pre-Messianic sonship. He appears here as the one through whom God creates and sustains all things. Moreover, it is an inheritance acquired by him as the Son of God, and received by him from God. *Through whom also he made the worlds:* This is the relation of the Son to creation, according to all the New-Testament writers. See John 1: 3, 10 (Rev. Ver. margin, and renderings of the American revisers); Col. 1: 16 (Rev. Ver.).

3. *The brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person* ("Effulgence of his glory, and the very image of his substance," Rev. Ver.): The idea of the first expression is, that Christ is the one in whom the divine glory shines forth—is manifested. The expression, *image of his substance*, means that the stamp or impress of the divine Being is on him; so that he bears his likeness, as the die leaves its impression on a coin. The word for *substance* means the reality or essence of a thing that underlies all appearances. *And upholding all things by the word of his power:* That is, his own power. This, taken in connection with the expression, *through whom*, in verse 2, and the whole statement in regard to his relation to God, would indicate that it was by a power resident in him, but not, in the strictest sense, original with him. *When he had by himself purged our sins* ("Had made purification of sins," Rev. Ver.): This, according to the predominant view of the book, refers to the sacrificial work of Jesus, through which he "purified our conscience from dead works to serve the living God." Of these three subordinate clauses in verse 3, the first two denote the facts in relation to the Son, by virtue of which he sat down on the right hand of God, and the third denotes the time when he assumed that position; and yet, not simply time, since it was only then that he could fully attain that which, by original right, belonged to him. (See note on Phil. 2: 10, Lesson VI.) *On the right hand of the Majesty on high:* The right hand is the place of power next to the king. (See Matt. 20: 21, 23.)

4. *Being made so much better than the angels* ("Having become," Rev. Ver.): This took place through his exaltation to the right hand of God; and it is, therefore, superiority of position that is denoted. *As he hath by inheritance obtained* ("As he hath inherited," Rev. Ver.): The kingdom of Christ, his seat at the right hand of power, is the Messianic kingdom, acquired by his Messianic work: the name is inherited by him—a natural right. But the two correspond to each other. The original name and the acquired position are alike superior to the angels. The name is evidently *Son of God*. (See verse 5.)

5. *For unto which of the angels said he at any time:* This begins the proof, gathered from the Scriptures, of the superiority of the Son to the angels, in both

Lesson X. GOD'S MESSAGE BY HIS SON. *Heb. 1:1-8; 2:1-4.*

6 And again, when he bringeth in the firstbegotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him.

7 And of the angels he saith, Who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire.

8 But unto the Son *he saith*, Thy throne, O God, *is* for ever and ever:

And he shall be to me a Son? 6 ¹ And when he again ² bringeth in the firstborn into ³ the world he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him. And of the angels he saith,

Who maketh his angels ⁴winds, And his ministers a flame of fire :

¹ Or, *And again, when he bringeth in.* ² Or, *shall have brought in.* ³ Gr. *the inhabited earth.* ⁴ Or, *spirits.*

name and position. This first citation is in regard to the name. The question is a rhetorical form of negative statement. *He never said to any angel.* The first quotation is from the second Psalm, verse 7. Originally the psalm sang the power and invincibility of the king of Israel, whom God had associated with himself in ruling the people of Israel, and exalted over all his enemies; and it was in this theocratic sense that he is called the Son of God. But the full realization of these divine promises to Israel and to its kings, with which the Old Testament is filled, in the sense in which they were first spoken, never came. One period after another of the nation's history came and went, and still the blessing was delayed. And yet God was continually proving himself a true and faithful God. And so the nation came to have a forward look, expecting continually the promised time. Finally all these hopes gathered about one person, and the expectation became a Messianic expectation. In this large sense, all Old-Testament prophecy came to be Messianic. The writer of this epistle was simply following the current interpretation of the Jewish rabbis, when he applied this psalm to the Messiah. *This day have I begotten thee:* The begetting is, in the original, the act of anointing by which God installs him king; but here, where the word Son is used to denote, not a position into which the Christ was put by the Father, but an original relation between them, the begetting denotes the mysterious source of that relation; and *this day* is the eternity to which it belongs, the beginning before the creation of the world. *I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son:* This quotation is from 2 Sam. 7: 14. The promise was made originally in regard to Solomon; and the whole promise, of which it forms a part, was strictly fulfilled in this original sense, except that the kingdom was not made eternal. At the same time, verse 14 forbids any strict Messianic application of it. But this unfulfilled remnant of it gave this the forward, expectant look that belongs to the Messianic prophecies; and it takes its place with the rest.

6. *And again when he bringeth in the firstbegotten into the world:* And when again he bringeth in the firstborn. Probably the word *again* modifies *bringeth*; but, whether this is so or not, the time of the verb is future, showing that it refers to the second coming of Christ. The meaning is, that God says it with reference to that time. The quotation is from Deut. 32: 43. It is not found in the Hebrew text, from which our version is taken; but our author quotes, always, from the Septuagint version, and there it is found. In the original, it is applied to God.

7. *Who maketh his angels spirits* ("winds," Rev. Ver.): The quotation is from Ps. 104: 4. In the original, it reads, "Who maketh the winds his messengers, and flames of fire his servants;" that is, God makes the elements to serve him, and do his errands. But in our passage it means, that he makes the angels assume these shapes, to carry out his purposes. The inferiority of the angels appears, first, in the service which they perform, in contrast with the lordship of the Son; and, second, in the changeable shapes which they are required to assume, contrasted with the eternally unchangeable nature of the Son. This transformation of the angels into elemental shapes is a matter of frequent allusion in the rabbinical writings.

8. *Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever:* This is from Ps. 45: 6. The

Lesson X. GOD'S MESSAGE BY HIS SON. *Heb. 1:1-8; 2:1-4.*

a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom.

2:1 Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let *them* slip.

2 For if the word spoken by angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward;

3 How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard *him*;

4 God also bearing *them* witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?

8 but of the Son *he saith*,
Thy throne, O God, is for ever
and ever;
And the sceptre of uprightness
is the sceptre of ¹thy king-
dom.

2:1 Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things that were heard, lest haply

2 we drift away *from them*. For if the word spoken through angels proved stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of

3 reward; how shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation? which having at the first been spoken through the Lord, was confirmed unto us by them that

4 heard; God also bearing witness with them, both by signs and wonders, and by manifold pow-
ers, and by ²gifts of the ³Holy Ghost, according to his own will.

¹ The two oldest Greek manuscripts read *his*. ² Gr. *distributions*. ³ Or, *Holy Spirit*; and so throughout this book.

psalm is an *epithalamium* for the marriage of some king, and this language is addressed to him. It is, of course, impossible to suppose that he could have been addressed as God in any strict sense of that word; and so the language in the psalm has been variously interpreted. The Messianic application of the psalm is taught by the Jewish rabbis. *A sceptre of righteousness* ("And the sceptre of uprightness," Rev. Ver.).

2:1. The writer comes now to the practical result of this difference between the old and new covenants. He warns his readers lest they fall away from a message so communicated and attested. *Therefore*: Since the word was spoken by the exalted Son of God. *To the things which we have heard*: The "so great salvation" spoken through the Lord. *Lest at any time we let them slip* ("We drift away *from them*," Rev. Ver.): It is a figurative representation of the danger that they were in, of getting beyond the reach of these things, so that they cease to influence them.

2. *For*: An argument from less to greater. *Spoken by angels*: Through angels. This refers to the tradition that the angels were employed in communicating the law. (See Acts 7: 53; Gal. 3: 19; Ps. 68: 17.) *Was stedfast* ("Proved stedfast," Rev. Ver.). *Not to be annulled or violated* is the meaning.

3. *Which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord* ("Through the Lord," Rev. Ver.): Contrasted with *through angels* (verse 2). *Was confirmed unto us*: As to those who could not receive the confirmation that came from hearing and seeing the Lord himself. The argument is: Men did not escape who transgressed the law spoken through angels; and certainly we shall not, if we neglect a salvation spoken through the Lord.

4. *Bearing them witness* ("Bearing witness with them," Rev. Ver.). *Signs and wonders*: Miracles regarded as proofs, and as portents, wonders. *Divers mirac-
les* ("Manifold powers," Rev. Ver.): That is, miraculous powers. *Gifts of the
Holy Ghost* ("Distributions of the Holy Spirit," Rev. Ver., margin): God's different imparations of the Spirit are meant. (See 1 Cor. 12.)

LESSON XI.

THE PRIESTHOOD OF CHRIST.—*Heb. 9:1-12.*

A GENERAL VIEW.—This lesson belongs to that part of the epistle in which the office of Christ is compared with that of the Levitical priesthood. This comparison begins with chapter 4: 14. The first point of likeness is, that Christ, like the Levitical high-priest, is in sympathy with his brethren. The first mark of superiority is, that he is without sin (4: 14-5: 10). Then, after a digression, the author shows that Christ is a high-priest after the order of Melchizedek, and proves a threefold superiority of Melchizedek to the Levitical priesthood,—first, in the fact that Abraham, the progenitor of that priestly order, paid tithes to Melchizedek, and was blessed by him; second, in the fact that the priests die, while it is testified of Melchizedek, that he lives; and, third, in the fact that Levi himself, being in the loins of Abraham, paid tithes to Melchizedek (7: 1-10). Then he shows how it follows from this, that the priesthood, and with it the law, is abolished: for, first, Christ belongs to another tribe than Levi, and so he brings the Levitical priesthood to an end; and, secondly, that the priesthood of Christ is after the order of Melchizedek, and not Levitical in its nature (7: 11-17). Then follow four points in which the priesthood of Christ is shown to be superior to the Levitical priesthood,—first, that it does what the latter fails to do; second, that God confirmed it by an oath; third, that he abides forever unchangeable; and, fourth, that his is the perfect offering, needing to be offered only once (7: 18-28). In the eighth chapter, the author shows this superiority further in the fact that Christ ministers in a heavenly sanctuary, of which the earthly is only a type, and that he is the Mediator of a better covenant. And so, finally, we come to our lesson, in which this comparison of the two sanctuaries is carried forward.

1 Then verily the first covenant had also ordinances of divine service, and a worldly sanctuary.

2 For there was a tabernacle made; the first, wherein was the candlestick, and the table, and the shewbread; which is called the sanctuary.

1 Now even the first covenant had ordinances of divine service, and its sanctuary, a sanctuary of this world. For there was a tabernacle prepared, the first, wherein ¹were the candlestick, and the table, and ²the shewbread; which 3 is called the Holy place. And

¹ Or, are. ² Gr. *the setting forth of the loaves.*

NOTES.—1. Translate, *Even the first covenant then had ordinances of worship, and its sanctuary belonging to this world.* *Then* indicates that the author resumes here the comparison begun in 8: 1-5. **Ordinances of worship:** The Levitical laws for the service of the tabernacle. **Belonging to this world:** A point of contrast, not of resemblance; since the sanctuary under the second covenant is heavenly.

2. **For there was a tabernacle made** (“Prepared,” Rev. Ver.): The word for *tabernacle* means either a tent or a booth,—any temporary or movable structure. **The first:** The first and second parts of the tabernacle are here designated as the first and second tabernacles, as if the veil between them made two tabernacles. **Wherein was** (“Are,” Rev. Ver., margin): The verb has to be supplied; and the proper thing to decide the tense is that of the verbs expressed, which are present throughout this section. **The candlestick, and the table, and the shewbread** (“The setting forth of the loaves,” Rev. Ver., margin): The terms are reversed here, so that, instead of *the bread of the setting forth*, which is the expression for the shewbread, we have the setting forth of the bread. For the description of this furniture of the holy place, see Ex. 37: 10-24. There were some differences between the furnishing of the tabernacle, and of the temples that succeeded

3 And after the second veil, the tabernacle which is called the Holiest of all;

4 Which had the golden censer, and the ark of the covenant overlaid round about with gold, wherein was the golden pot that had manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant;

5 And over it the cherubim of glory shadowing the mercyseat; of which we cannot now speak particularly.

6 Now when these things were thus ordained, the priests went always into the first tabernacle, accomplishing the service of God.

after the second veil, the tabernacle which is called the Holy of holies; having a golden ¹ censer, and the ark of the covenant overlaid round about with gold, wherein ² was a golden pot holding the manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant; and above it cherubim of glory overshadowing ³ the mercy seat; of which things we cannot now speak severally. Now these things having been thus prepared, the priests go in continually into the first tabernacle, accomplishing the services; but into the second

¹ Or, *altar of incense.* ² Or, is. ³ Gr. *the propitiatory.*

it; but the author evidently means to give here that of the tabernacle. *The sanctuary* ("The holy place," Rev. Ver.): The name contrasts it with the Holy of holies.

3. *The second veil:* The first veil—usually called a curtain—was that before the entrance of the tabernacle, separating it from the court of the tabernacle. *Holy of holies:* The Hebrew superlative, meaning *the holiest place.*

4. *Which had the golden censer* ("Having a golden altar of incense," Rev. Ver., margin, but put into the text by the American revisers). There was a golden censer used by the highpriest on the day of atonement to carry the incense into the Holy of holies; but it was not of sufficient importance to find any place in the description of the furniture of the tabernacle anywhere in the Old Testament, and would certainly not be found here among the contents of the Holy of holies, to which in any case it did not belong. But the altar of incense was not placed within the veil, but in the holy place. It was, to be sure, intimately associated with that in the service of the great day of atonement, as was also the altar of sacrifice; but its place was before the veil. There may be an explanation of this difficulty, so as to remove the appearance of mistake, but it has not yet been made. *The ark of the covenant:* The sacred chest containing the two tables of the law, engraved on stones, on which the covenant was based. *Wherein was:* Are (see on verse 2). *The golden pot that had manna* ("A golden pot containing the manna," Rev. Ver.): The pot of manna and the rod were to be placed before the ark, not in it (see Ex. 16: 32-34, Num. 17: 10, 11). There was, however, a traditional interpretation of these passages conforming with the view given here. Wherever these were placed, they early disappeared (see 1 Kings 8: 9). The ark itself disappeared at the destruction of Solomon's temple, leaving the inner shrine of the temple empty and dark.

5. *And above it cherubim of glory, overshadowing the mercy seat* (Rev. Ver.): Above the ark were placed two winged creatures, facing each other; and over them the divine glory manifested itself. It is probably with reference to this latter fact, that they are called *cherubim of glory* (see Ex. 25: 17-22; 37: 7-9; 1 Sam. 4: 4). *The mercy seat:* The cover of the ark, called in the Septuagint the propitiatory (place or thing), since on it was sprinkled the blood of sacrifice on the day of atonement. *Of which things:* All these furnishings of the tabernacle. Instead of explaining these in detail, he hastens to the characteristic feature,—the inaccessibility of the Holy of holies.

6. *Now when these things were thus ordained* ("These things having been thus prepared," Rev. Ver.). *The priests went always into the first tabernacle* ("go in continually," Rev. Ver.): Every day, offering incense morning and evening, and preparing and lighting the lamps; and every week, changing the shewbread.

7 But into the second *went* the high priest alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and *for* the errors of the people:

8 The Holy Ghost this signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing:

9 Which *was* a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience;

the high priest alone, once in the year, not without blood, which he offereth for himself, and for 8 the ¹errors of the people: the Holy Ghost this signifying, that the way into the holy place hath not yet been made manifest, while as the first tabernacle is 9 yet standing; which *is* a parable for the time *now* present; according to which are offered both gifts and sacrifices that cannot, as touching the conscience, make 10 the worshipper perfect, *being* only (with meats and drinks and

¹ Gr. *ignorances*.

7. But into the second (tabernacle) the high priest alone, once in the year: On the great day of atonement, the tenth of the seventh month, the month Tisri, five days before the Feast of Tabernacles. *Not without blood:* The blood of the sacrifice, which he sprinkled on the lid of the ark, signifying the expiation of sins, without which the entrance to the holiest place was impossible. *Which he offered* ("offereth," Rev. Ver.): The offering for himself was one of the points of contrast to Christ, who was sinless (see 7: 28). *For the errors of the people:* The word for *errors* denotes sins committed inadvertently, wilful sins being apparently excluded from the operation of the law of atonement (see Num. 15: 22-31): and yet, see Ps. 51: 16, 17, where the Psalmist evidently speaks of sacrifice in connection with flagrant sin.

8. The Holy Ghost this signifying: The Mosaic ritual being regarded as a revelation of the Holy Spirit, his idea in this part of it is said to be what follows. *The way into the holiest of all:* The holy place. The holiest place is meant, but the distinction is dropped hereafter throughout the chapter. Moreover, it is the true, and not the merely symbolical holy place that is meant, as the author is giving here the meaning of the earthly tabernacle; not the facts about its service, but the explanation of the facts. *Was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing* ("Hath not yet been made manifest, while as the first tabernacle is yet standing," Rev. Ver.): The present (and primary) tenses used throughout the paragraph refer to the fact that the first covenant was still observed, though it was superseded and out of date. *The first tabernacle:* Locally first, the one before the veil, as this is the invariable use of the term elsewhere in the passage; for, in verse 11, the greater and more perfect tabernacle is that through which Christ passes into the holy place, and is therefore a first heavenly tabernacle, in contrast with a first earthly tabernacle in verse 8. The idea is, that the first tabernacle stands shut out and barred off from the holy place, its daily service giving no admission to God; so that, as long as it stands, it is a continual sign that the way to God is not yet known.

9. Which was a figure for the time then present: Which is a figure for the present time. *Which* refers to the tabernacle. The present time is the Messianic period, in relation to which the tabernacle is a figure, representing its realities. It is here that the contrast between the types and figures of the old covenant, and the antitypes and realities of the new, begins. *In which were offered* ("According to which are offered," Rev. Ver.): The offering of sacrifices that had no power to cleanse, except symbolically, is in accordance with the figurative nature of the earthly tabernacle. *That cannot, as touching the conscience, make the worshipper perfect* (Rev. Ver.): *As touching the conscience* is in contrast with the *purification of the flesh* in verse 13, which is represented as the effect of these sacrifices (see also the term *carnal ordinances* in verse 10). They

10 *Which stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation.*

11 *But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building;*

12 *Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.*

divers washings) carnal ordinances, imposed until a time of reformation.

11 *But Christ having come a high priest of ¹the good things to come, through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say,*
 12 *not of this creation, nor yet through the blood of goats and calves, but through his own blood, entered in once for all into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption.*

¹ Some ancient authorities read *the good things that are come.*

were merely outward symbols of sacrifice, that could not purify the man so as to satisfy his conscience.

10. *Which stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances* ("Being only (with meats and drinks and divers washings) carnal ordinances," Rev. Ver.): That is, these sacrifices, together with the whole matter of regulations in regard to meats and drinks and washings, are only carnal ordinances, not affecting the spirit. *Until the time of reformation*: Of reconstruction. It is not personal amendment that is meant, but religious reconstruction.

11. *Of good things to come* ("The good things to come," Rev. Ver.): The things of the Messianic kingdom, to be ushered in with the return of the Christ. He is called the high-priest of these things, since it is through his high-priesthood that they are obtained. *By a greater and more perfect tabernacle* ("Through the greater," Rev. Ver.): What this greater tabernacle is, appears from the fact that the holy place into which he entered through it is heaven itself, in which God dwells. The tabernacle then, which forms the vestibule to this, would be probably the lower heavens, in which saints and angels dwell, and in which God is perfectly worshipped. Christ passed through these heavens into the heaven where God himself dwells (see 4: 14, 8: 4, 9: 23 compare verse 21, 12: 22-24). The difference between the heavenly and earthly tabernacle is, that the latter is separated from the holy place, while the former is the way into it (see 10: 19). *Not of this building* ("This creation," Rev. Ver.): Not belonging to this present order of things.

12. *Neither by the blood of bulls and of goats* ("Nor yet through the blood of goats and calves," Rev. Ver.): All these phrases from *by (through) a greater . . . tabernacle*, through *by (through) his own blood*, modify the verb *entered*, and denote that through which this was accomplished. *Entered in once* ("Once for all," Rev. Ver.): Contrasted with the frequent offerings and enterings necessary in the earthly high-priest. *Having obtained eternal redemption*: A redemption eternally valid, instead of the imperfect, transient purification, needing yearly renewal, accomplished by the earthly high-priest.

Notice, that in verse 14 it appears that this purification effected by Christ is not simply a legal expiation, but an inward, spiritual purification. The sacrifice of Christ is an expiation of our sins; but it is only as we are ourselves spiritually one with Christ in that sacrifice, so that in it we, too, are offered up, that we are ourselves redeemed. Our lesson taken by itself might leave the impression that the author took simply an outward, legal view of the sacrifice of Christ, which is far from the truth (see 2: 10-17; 5: 7-10; 8: 6-12; 10: 5-18; 13: 20, 21).

LESSON XII.

CHRISTIAN PROGRESS.—2 Pet. 1:1-11.

A GENERAL VIEW.—For a discussion of the peculiarities and of the suspected genuineness of this epistle, our readers are referred to Farrar's "Early Days of Christianity." It would be neither scholarly nor honest to deny that the objections there set forth against its genuineness are very weighty and almost decisive. Certainly it must be said, that these objections so far outweigh the comparatively slight reasons for believing it to be the work of the Apostle Peter, that the balance of scholarly opinion is decidedly against it. The external testimony in its favor is less than in the case of any other New-Testament writing; and the internal difficulties, such as its difference in style and thought from the first epistle, its allusions to the writings of Paul, and its peculiar view of the second coming of our Lord, differing from that of every other New-Testament writing, are the greatest that beset any of these books. At the same time, it belongs to the New-Testament canon, by virtue of its acknowledged superiority to any writings of the period that followed. The key-word of the epistle is *knowledge*,—the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord. This knowledge is regarded as essential to righteousness and to eternal life. The author, therefore, warns his readers against false teachers, who deny the Lord, and lead men away into deadly sins. Especially he charges them to beware of those who deny the Lord's return, and are encouraged by this unbelief to walk in sin, and teaches that Christ will come, though his coming be delayed. The epistle is general in its address, but it claims to be intended for the same readers as the first epistle (see 1 Pet. 1:1; 2 Pet. 3:1). Our lesson, after the address of the epistle, contains an exhortation to cultivate the Christian virtues.

1 Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ:

2 Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord,

1 Simon Peter, a ²servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained ³a like precious faith with us in the righteousness of ⁴our God and Saviour Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace be multiplied in the knowledge of God and of Jesus ³our Lord; seeing that his divine

¹ Many ancient authorities read *Symeon*. ² Gr. *bondservant*. ³ Gr. *an equally precious*. ⁴ Or, *our God and the Saviour*.

NOTES.—1. *Simon Peter*: More probably this first name is Symeon, as in the margin of the Revised Version. *A servant*: Literally, *a slave* or *bond-servant*, adding to the idea of service that of belonging to the Lord. *To them that have obtained*: The verb means, etymologically, *to obtain by lot*; but to suppose that there is in it any reference to the doctrine of election, as some commentators do, is preposterous. See Acts 1:17, where the same word is used. *A like precious faith*: A faith of equal value, one that insures the same blessings. *With us*: The author has in mind here, probably, the Jewish Christians, with whom his Gentile readers have an equally precious faith. *Through the righteousness* ("in," Rev. Ver.): But it is not a faith in his righteousness, but a faith obtained in that, or by virtue of it. Probably it means the righteousness which leads to him to bestow the same faith on both Jew and Gentile, without respect of persons. *Of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ* ("Our God and the Saviour Jesus Christ," Rev. Ver., margin, and put into the text by the American revisers): The Revised Version reads, *Our God and Saviour Jesus Christ*; but while this is grammatically preferable, though not certain, the usage of the New Testament is plainly against it, as there is not one plain case in which the name God is applied to Jesus.

2. *Grace and peace*: The distinctive Christian salutations; the former denoting

3 According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue:

4 Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

5 And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge;

power hath granted unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that called us ¹ by his own glory and virtue; whereby he hath granted unto us his precious and exceeding great promises; that through these ye may become partakers of ² the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world by lust. Yea, and for this very cause adding on your part all diligence, in your faith

¹ Some ancient authorities read *through glory and virtue.* ² Or, *a.*

the favor of God, and the latter the welfare proceeding from that favor. *Through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord* ("In the knowledge," Rev. Ver.): It denotes that in which this grace and peace will be multiplied. It is as they know God and Christ, that they will be so blessed.

3. *According as* ("seeing that," Rev. Ver.): Probably verses 3, 4, are not to be connected with the preceding verses, as it is unusual to lengthen out a salutation in this way, but with the exhortation beginning with verse 5. These things constitute the reason of that appeal, as he says in verse 5. *All things that pertain unto life and godliness:* That tend to life. The things that tend to this are mentioned as God's gift, because he wishes to introduce afterwards what they are to contribute toward the same result. *Life* is here opposed to *corruption* in verse 4. It is the state of spiritual vigor and soundness, with which is contrasted the decay of the spiritual faculties. *Godliness* is this life in its outward activities. *Through the knowledge of him that hath called us:* This is the means by which God bestows these gifts tending to life and godliness: it is through the knowledge of himself. He is styled *him that called us*, because it is the knowledge of God in his gracious action that is the channel of these divine gifts and influences. The call of God is his gracious influence upon the souls of men, by which they become his servants, or the leaders of men in the work of his kingdom. *To glory and virtue* ("by his own glory and virtue," Rev. Ver.): These are words fitly chosen. By putting in *his own*, the writer tacitly contrasts them with the glory and virtue, the life and godliness, to which God calls us. It is by these qualities in himself that God calls us to the same; and he chooses the homely word *virtue*, not generally applied to God, instead of the more exalted word *holiness*, in order to suggest more vividly the relation of our virtuous qualities to corresponding things in God.

4. *Whereby he hath granted unto us his precious and exceeding great promises* (Rev. Ver.): *Whereby* refers to the glory and virtue of the preceding verse. The *promises* are not in general the promises of the Christian life, but specially those in regard to the re-appearance of Christ, and the establishment of his kingdom (see verse 15 *sqq.*, chapter 3: 4 *sqq.*). This makes the burden of the epistle, and is the expectation by which the writer urges his readers to "all holy conversation and godliness." *That through these ye may become partakers of the divine nature* (Rev. Ver.): That is, through these promises; not through their fulfilment, but through the promises themselves, the inducements that they contain to holy living. This forward and hopeful look of the spirit is a great incitement to virtue. *Partakers of the divine nature:* The spiritual likeness to God that the truth of God within imparts. *Having escaped from the corruption:* This word is the opposite of *life*, and denotes the state of spiritual destruction and decay which results from sin. *Through lust:* Literally, *in lust*, or evil desire, as that in which this decay resides.

5. *And beside this:* *And even for this same reason.* Because of all these things

6 And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness;

7 And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity.

8 For if these things be in you, and abound, they make *you* that *ye shall* neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

9 But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins.

10 Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your

supply virtue; and in *your* virtue 6 knowledge; and in *your* knowledge ¹temperance; and in *your* ¹temperance patience; and in *your* 7 *your* patience godliness; and in *your* godliness love of the brethren; and in *your* love of the 8 brethren love. For if these things are yours and abound, they make you to be not idle nor unfruitful unto the knowledge of 9 our Lord Jesus Christ. For he that lacketh these things is blind, ²seeing only what is near, having forgotten the cleansing from his 10 old sins. Wherefore, brethren, give the more diligence to make your calling and election sure:

¹ Or, *self-control*. ² Or, *closing his eyes*.

that he has said, because of what God has bestowed on them tending to life and godliness, and that they may become partakers of the divine nature, he urges them to contribute on their part to the same result. *Giving all diligence* ("adding on your part all diligence," or zeal, Rev. Ver.): This represents their contribution to the desired end. *Add to your faith virtue* ("in your faith supply virtue," Rev. Ver.): The meaning is, *Having faith, do not forget to have also virtue, which belongs with it. And in your virtue knowledge*: That is, probably, that practical knowledge that shows a man what to do, and how to do it, so that their virtue may be intelligent.

6. *In your knowledge temperance* ("Self-control," Rev. Ver., margin): The power to keep the appetites and passions in check that knowledge brings. *Patience*: Steadfastness. That which keeps a man loyal under persecutions. This is joined with self-control, because the power to endure and to resist both belong to self-mastery. *Godliness*: Piety, the worshipping and reverential side of goodness. He would have their steadfastness not simply heroic, but joined with that reverence which is its true source.

7. *Brotherly kindness* ("love of the brethren," Rev. Ver.). *Charity* ("love," Rev. Ver.). These two graces—love of their Christian brethren, and love of all men—are the necessary accompaniments of godliness (see 1 John 4: 20).

8. *Be in you*: Belong to you. *Abound*: Increase. Not so much abundance, as growth, is the law of the Christian life. *Barren* ("idle," Rev. Ver.): But the idleness denoted is not so much inactivity, as uselessness; moreover, the idea is not that the things mentioned produce fruitfulness, but that they constitute it. *In the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ* ("unto the knowledge," Rev. Ver.): Denotes the end to which all this fruitfulness tends. The knowledge of the Lord is not only the beginning of the Christian life, but its end. To know God is to serve him; and, in turn, to serve God is to know him.

9. *But he that lacketh these things* ("for he," Rev. Ver.): It is an argument from the opposite. *These things being in them make them fruitful for knowledge; for he that lacks them is blind, without knowledge therefore. Seeing only what is near* (Rev. Ver.): Seeing only earthly, not heavenly, things. *Having forgotten the cleansing from his old sins* (Rev. Ver.): His blindness to heavenly things is caused by his forgetfulness of the grace bestowed on him at his conversion. The cleansing is not here forgiveness, nor baptism,—the former is irrelevant, and the latter only formal,—but the change symbolized by baptism, the radical, though not complete, cleansing at the new birth, is meant.

10. *Wherefore the rather, . . . give diligence* ("wherefore . . . give the more

calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall:

ii For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

ii for if ye do these things, ye shall never stumble: for thus shall be richly supplied unto you the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

diligence," Rev. Ver.). *To make your calling and election sure:* The calling is that which makes the choice known. God chooses men, and calls them to himself: here both are treated as provisional acts, depending for their final ratification on the fruitfulness of the man. It is he that endures to the end, that shall be saved. *Ye shall never fall:* That is, fail of salvation.

ii. *For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly* ("shall be richly supplied unto you the entrance," Rev. Ver): Notice the recurrence of this word *supply* (see verse 5). It is as they supply virtue and the like, that God supplies entrance to his kingdom. *Richly:* Not stintedly, without hinderance or difficulty (see for the opposite 1 Pet. 4:18).

THIRD QUARTER.

LESSON I.

REVOLT OF THE TEN TRIBES.—1 Kings 12:6-17.

A GENERAL VIEW.

THIS revolt of the ten tribes had, for its immediate occasion, the disaffection caused by the heavy burdens laid upon the people by Solomon, and Rehoboam's haughty and unwise refusal to lighten them. Nothing is said of this disaffection in the account of Solomon's reign; but it is evident that his immense wealth must have resulted in the impoverishment of his people, as the works that he built must have required a constant and exacting service of them. The establishment of the kingdom had consolidated the nation, and given it an importance and stability that it could never have had as a loose confederacy of tribes; but it had its other side, as Samuel had foreseen, owing to the fact that a kingdom was at that time a despotism, in which the king was the nation, and the people were his serfs, helping to build up a greatness that they did not share. The free spirit of the nomad Israelites revolted, when this state of things reached its culmination in Solomon; and the growing disaffection, which the king's power had kept down, broke out under Rehoboam. But there was another cause lying back of this, and giving shape to it. Tribal jealousy had from the first threatened the stability of the kingdom. It was probably owing to the contempt of the larger tribes for little Benjamin, that Saul's accession to the kingdom was delayed so long; and, when David began to reign, adhesion of the ten tribes to Ishbosheth was due to the fiercer jealousy of Ephraim for its rival, Judah. These were from the beginning the two great tribes; but for the first three hundred years Ephraim had the decided ascendancy. It was given the central and most favored part of the land, and the Ephraimite city of Shiloh was made the dwelling-place of the ark, and so the religious capital of the people; and when a dynasty was established in Judah, and Jerusalem was made both the political and religious capital of the nation, it was felt that this involved a distinct rejection of "the tent of Joseph" and of the tribe of Ephraim (see Ps. 78: 67, 68). The revolt was largely, therefore, a re-assertion of the ascendancy of Ephraim, in which its natural confederates were the northern tribes.

6 And king Rehoboam consulted with the old men, that stood before Solomon his father while he yet lived, and said, How do ye advise that I may answer this people?

7 And they spake unto him, saying, If thou wilt be a servant unto this people this day, and wilt serve them, and answer them, and speak good words to them, then they will be thy servants for ever.

8 But he forsook the counsel of the old men, which they had given him, and consulted with the young men that were grown up with him, and which stood before him:

9 And he said unto them, What counsel give ye that we may answer this people, who have spoken to me, saying, Make the yoke which thy father did put upon us lighter?

10 And the young men that were grown up with him spake unto him, saying, Thus shalt thou speak unto this people that spake unto thee, saying, Thy father made our yoke heavy, but make thou *it* lighter unto us; thus shalt thou say unto them, My little *finger* shall be thicker than my father's loins.

11 And now whereas my father did lade you with a heavy yoke, I

NOTES. — 6. Rehoboam had shown his wisdom in coming to Shechem, a central and convenient place, for his inauguration into the kingly office: but there he had been met with the demand of the people, that he lighten their burdens, the imposts and enforced service exacted by Solomon; and they had made this the condition of their subjection to him. When the king found himself confronted with this demand, he sent the people away for three days, to give him an opportunity to consult with his advisers. *Rehoboam*: The son of Solomon by Naamah an Ammonitess (see 14: 21, 31). *The old men, that stood before Solomon his father*: In chapter 4, a list of Solomon's officers, priests, recorders, captains, assessors, and the like, is given. Whether these are intended here, or others, distinctively counsellors, we cannot tell.

7. The point of this answer is in the contrast between *this day* and *forever*. Give in to them now, and so gain a permanent ascendancy over them. *If thou wilt be a servant*: It is not without reason that the concession is spoken of in this way; for the requirement of the people had not been a humble petition, but one in which they had assumed to be masters of the situation, and had dictated terms to the king. The advice was, therefore, that the king allow them to be masters for this once, in order to gain the kingdom which they made to depend on that. They saw that the demand was a reasonable one, and one which the people were in a condition to enforce. *Good words*: The soft answer which turneth away wrath (Prov. 15: 1).

8. *The young men that were grown up with him*: Had grown up. It denotes the process, and not the result. *Which stood before him*: A phrase denoting the attendants or ministers of a king. It is in contrast with the standing before Solomon (verse 6). He turned from the counsel of the old men who had served his father, to the young men who had been his companions, and were now his servants. He had been brought up in a despotic court, and could not brook the counsel of submission given by the wise elders.

9. *The yoke which thy father did put upon us* (see chapters 4; 5: 13-15; 7: 1-12; 10: 14-29; 11: 27, 28). Some of these passages tell us of the service exacted by Solomon, and some of his enormous wealth, which meant, of course, a heavy tribute paid to him by the people.

10. *Thy father made our yoke heavy, but make thou it lighter*: They repeat what the people said, in order to put in contrast with it their answer. *My little finger shall be thicker than my father's loins*: The word *finger* is not in the text, and the only reason for supplying it is, that the little finger makes a proper contrast to the loins in the matter of thickness and strength. But the point of contrast is plain enough. They will find him so much worse than his father. These young men feel the defiance implied in the people's request; and they fling back defiance, without counting the difficulties as the old men did.

will add to your yoke: my father hath chastened you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions.

12 So Jeroboam and all the people came to Rehoboam the third day, as the king had appointed, saying, Come to me again the third day.

13 And the king answered the people ¹roughly, and forsook the old men's counsel that they gave him;

14 And spake to them after the counsel of the young men, saying, My father made your yoke heavy, and I will add to your yoke: my father *also* chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions.

15 Wherefore the king hearkened

not unto the people; for the cause was from the *LORD*, that he might perform his saying, which the *LORD* spake by Ahijah the Shilonite unto Jeroboam the son of Nebat.

16 So when all Israel saw that the king hearkened not unto them, the people answered the king, saying, What portion have we in David? neither *have we* inheritance in the son of Jesse: to your tents, O Israel: now see to thine own house, David. So Israel departed unto their tents.

17 But *as for* the children of Israel which dwelt in the cities of Judah, Rehoboam reigned over them.

¹ Heb. *hardly*.

11. *Scorpions*: The animal itself was an insect, several inches long, with a sting in the end of its tail, the effect of which was painful and serious, but not fatal. There is some probability that there was a whip armed with iron points to which this name was applied; but, if there was no such use of the word, the language is plain enough and sufficiently strong. Of course the whipping is that of a taskmaster or overseer (*Ex. 5: 13, 14*). The implication that the Israelites were driven to their tasks with whips gives a striking picture of the dark side of Solomon's reign.

12. *Jeroboam*: The son of Nebat, an Ephraimite, who had lived with his widowed mother Zeruah in Zereda, until Solomon, seeing his capacity for work, singled him out as overseer of the levy of men from his tribe to build the walls of Jerusalem. This led to his encounter with the prophet Ahijah, from Shiloh in Ephraim, who prophesied the partition of the kingdom, and the reign of Jeroboam over ten of the tribes. In some way this came to Solomon's ears; and Jeroboam had to fly to Egypt, where he remained until the death of Solomon. Naturally enough, he became the leader of the people in this remonstrance.

The third day: See verse 5.

13. *Answered the people roughly*: It was no temperate and conciliatory refusal, attempting to justify his course, but a threatening and contemptuous rejection.

15. *For the cause was from the Lord*: This is the providential explanation of the king's harsh reply. The Lord had a purpose to accomplish, and this made it possible. It was Rehoboam's refusal that fulfilled the prophecy in regard to the rending of the kingdom (see *11: 29-31*).

16. *What portion have we in David?* These words are the same used as a rallying cry by Sheba in his attempt to take advantage of this same tribal jealousy to carry forward Absalom's rebellion after its collapse (see *2 Sam. 20: 1*). *To your tents, O Israel*: Israel is here the rest of the tribes, contrasted with Judah. The cry means to call them off from following the king. Their coming together was at the king's instance, and their departure to their tents would signify that they cast him off. *See to thine own house, David*: David's own tribe, Judah, is meant. The house, or dynasty, of David is bidden to care for its own tribe, and leave the rest of the people to themselves.

17. *The children of Israel which dwelt in the cities of Judah*: Not the members of the tribe of Judah, but those of the other tribes that were settled in Judah, and whose interests were there.

LESSON II.

IDOLATRY ESTABLISHED.—1 Kings 12:25-33.

A GENERAL VIEW.—After the revolt at Shechem, Rehoboam made one last attempt, either to adjust things with the revolted tribes, or to collect tribute from them, sending out, for the one purpose or the other, Adoram, his assessor; and the people put the final touch on their rejection of the king by putting his officer to death. Then he collected an army to subjugate them; but the Lord forbade war among brethren, and told Rehoboam that the separation of the kingdom was from him. Meantime, Jeroboam had been made king of the ten tribes; but a formidable obstacle stood in his way at the very beginning. In spite of the revolt against an oppressive rule of a hated tribe, there was still at Jerusalem the religious sanctuary of the nation, about which the affections and religious feelings of the people had begun to gather. David had designed that this should be so,—that to the political unity of the people should be added a stronger religious unity, and that both should gather about one place; so that the sceptre once established in Judah should not depart from it. He had seen that the number of high-places scattered over the land divided the religious feelings of the people, and that one sanctuary would tend to weld them together. Hence, the removal of the ark to Jerusalem, and the building of the temple, and hence Jeroboam's perplexity. To avoid this, he managed shrewdly. He did not set up many high-places, which would have lost for him the unity secured by David for his kingdom, nor did he leave worship to regulate itself; and yet he took advantage of the one apparently weak spot in David's organization of the national religion. By setting up two places of worship, one at the northern, and the other at the southern, end of his kingdom, he avoided the long pilgrimages necessary under David's plan, and the possible jealousy of a favored spot. He availed himself also of the idolatrous tendencies of the people; and, while he provided still for the worship of Jehovah, he set up a golden calf or bullock in each place to represent him.

25 ¶ Then Jeroboam built Shechem in mount Ephraim, and dwelt therein; and went out from thence, and built Penuel.

26 And Jeroboam said in his heart, Now shall the kingdom return to the house of David:
27 If this people go up to do sac-

NOTES.—25. *Shechem in Mount Ephraim*: This Shechem is the Sychar of the New Testament, and the modern Nablus. It is beautifully situated in the valley between Ebal and Gerizim; and, owing to its central location, it was from the first an important place in both the religious and political history of the nation, and at this time the most historical, if not the most important, within the borders of Ephraim (see Gen. 12: 6, 7; 33: 18-20; 35: 1-4; Josh. 21: 20, 21; 8: 33-35; 24: 1, 25; Judges 9: 1-54). When it says that Jeroboam built it, it must mean simply that he strengthened and enlarged it. It was destroyed by Abimelech, but must have been rebuilt, as appears from Rehoboam's going there to be inaugurated. *Mount Ephraim*: The hill country of Ephraim: there is no single mountain of that name. *Penuel*: A place on the east of the Jordan, near Succoth, and between that and the Jabbok. It afforded Jeroboam a strong hold on that side of the river, and commanded the road from thence to his capital (see Gen. 32: 30, 31; Judg. 8: 5-17).

27. *If this people go up to do sacrifice in the house of the Lord at Jerusalem*: It was the feeling engendered in the people, that there was only one place to worship, and in which God bestowed his favor, that Jeroboam feared. This had served to keep the people together, and there was danger now that it would awaken the old feeling.

rifice in the house of the LORD at Jerusalem, then shall the heart of this people turn again unto their lord, *even* unto Rehoboam king of Judah, and they shall kill me, and go again to Rehoboam king of Judah.

28 Whereupon the king took counsel, and made two calves of gold, and said unto them, It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem: behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.

29 And he set the one in Beth-el, and the other put he in Dan.

30 And this thing became a sin: for the people went *to worship* before the one, *even* unto Dan.

31 And he made an house of high places, and made priests of the lowest of the people, which were not of the sons of Levi.

32 And Jeroboam ordained a feast in the eighth month, on the fifteenth day of the month, like unto the feast that *is* in Judah, and he¹ offered upon the altar. So did he

¹ Or, *went up to the altar*, etc.

And they shall kill me: Will kill. They would do this as a means of regaining favor with Rehoboam (see 2 Sam. 4:5-7).

28. *And made two calves of gold:* Probably, from what we know of such images, bullocks are meant here, since the object was to express the strength of the Deity. *It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem:* He puts before them the one objection to this, that obtained even in the days of the united kingdom, — that it was too much. And now they would share the king's prejudice against Jerusalem so far, that they would welcome gladly any device that would free them altogether from any obligation to it.

Behold thy gods: These are very nearly the words in which Aaron called the people to worship the golden calf, when Moses was in the mount (see Ex. 32:4, 8). In them Jeroboam did not bring other gods for the people to worship, but idolatrous representations of Jehovah, appealing to the craving of the unspiritual mind for some visible object of worship.

29. *Bethel:* A place in the extreme south of Israel, on the borders of Ephraim and Benjamin, which had been from the beginning a holy place (see Gen. 28:19; 35:14, 15; 12:8; 13:3, 4; Judg. 20:18, 26, 31; 21:2-4; 1 Sam. 7:16). In the passages from Judges, Bethel is translated *house of God*. *Dan:* A place not having any recorded sanctity, but selected on account of its location in the extreme north of the country. It belonged originally to the Zidonians, under the name of Laish (see Josh. 19:47; Judg. 18:29).

30. *This thing became a sin:* That is, as explained in what follows; Jeroboam's setting up of the images occasioned the sin of worshipping them in the people. *Before the one, even unto Dan:* As it stands, this is a singular statement, implying that they went to only one, and that the more inaccessible place to the majority of them. Probably there is some error in the text here, possibly an omission of a similar statement in regard to Bethel.

31. *An house of high places:* The high places, the mountains and hills, were supposed to be specially acceptable as places of worship to the Deity; and consequently we find their use a very common thing throughout Jewish history. *A house of the high places* was a shrine, or chapel, for worship erected in such a place. Jeroboam built one such place of worship in both Bethel and Dan. *Of the lowest of the people:* Literally, of the ends of the people. Probably it means that he took them from all classes, and not from the Levitical priestly caste. This seems to have been necessitated by the refusal of the Levitical priests to officiate at the new altars; and it was accompanied by an exodus of the priests to Jerusalem and Judaea (see 2 Chron. 11:13, 14).

32. *In the eighth month, on the fifteenth day of the month, like unto the feast that is in Judah:* The Jewish feast to which this corresponded was the Feast of Tabernacles in the seventh month. As it was a harvest feast, the later time

in Beth-el,¹ sacrificing unto the calves that he had made: and he placed in Beth-el the priests of the high places which he had made.

33 So he ²offered upon the altar which he had made in Beth-el the

fifteenth day of the eighth month, even in the month which he had devised of his own heart; and ordained a feast unto the children of Israel: and he offered upon the altar, ³and burnt incense.

¹ Or, to sacrifice. ² Or, went up to the altar, etc. ³ Heb. to burn incense.

of harvest in the northern part of the land may have had something to do with the change (see Lev. 23:34; Deut. 16:13-15). *He offered upon the altar*: He went up to the altar, ascended the steps leading up to it, implying that he offered sacrifice himself. *So did he in Bethel*: Not so also, but stating that it was in Bethel that he did this. *Sacrificing*: To sacrifice. The meaning is, he did so, viz., went up on the altar in Bethel, to sacrifice.

33. *So he offered upon the altar*: Went up to the altar (see note on preceding verse). *Which he had devised of his own heart*: Instead of following the ordinance in regard to the month of the feast. The king, as such, had no right to regulate these matters. *He offered upon the altar, and burnt incense*: He went up to the altar to burn incense. This verse really belongs with the next chapter.

LESSON III.

OMRI AND AHAB.—1 Kings 16:23-34.

A GENERAL VIEW.—When Jeroboam inaugurated the new worship at Bethel, a prophet from Judah appeared, who denounced the altar erected by the king, and predicted its overthrow. Then, the king's son being sick, he sent his wife to consult the prophet who had predicted the division of the kingdom and his accession to the throne of Israel; and Ahijah prophesied the destruction of Jeroboam's house, and the overthrow of the northern kingdom, because of this setting up of a strange worship. This prophecy in regard to the house of Jeroboam was fulfilled in the reign of his son Nadab. After a short reign of two years, Nadab was slain by Baasha of the tribe of Issachar, who conspired against him during the siege of Gibbethon in a war with the Philistines. This Baasha reigned twenty-four years, in the course of which he slew all the house of Jeroboam; but he himself continued the sin of the idolatrous worship. Then the Lord raised up a prophet, Jehu, the son of Hanani, who prophesied the overthrow of his dynasty. This prophecy was fulfilled in the reign of his son Elah, who, after two years, was slain by Zimri, one of his captains. He, in his turn, was defeated by Omri, the captain of the host, and slew himself. Omri, however, succeeded in establishing himself in the kingdom only after four years' war with his rival, Tibni. In the mean time, during the reign of Jeroboam, the capital had been transferred to Tirzah, a place famous for its beauty. It thus appears that the northern kingdom had a turbulent history, with a frequent change of dynasty, during the first forty-eight years; but Omri succeeded in introducing a more stable condition of things, in which his family retained possession of the throne for four reigns, covering forty-eight years.

23 ¶ In the thirty and first year of Asa king of Judah began Omri to reign over Israel, twelve years: six years reigned he in Tirzah.

NOTES.—23. *In the thirty and first year of Asa king of Judah*: Asa was the third king of Judah, succeeding his father, Abijam, who reigned three years; Abijam's predecessor being his father Rehoboam, who reigned seventeen years. *Twelve years*: As the beginning of this reign is put in the thirty-first year of Asa's reign, and the beginning of Ahab's reign in the thirty-eighth, there is a mistake somewhere. The vari-

24 And he bought the hill Samaria of Shemer for two talents of silver, and built on the hill, and called the name of the city which he built, after the name of Shemer, owner of the hill, ¹ Samaria.

25 ¶ But Omri wrought evil in the eyes of the LORD, and did worse than all that *were* before him.

26 For he walked in all the way of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, and in his sin wherewith he made Israel to sin, to provoke the LORD God of Israel to anger with their vanities.

27 Now the rest of the acts of Omri which he did, and his might that he shewed, *are* they not written

in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel?

28 So Omri slept with his fathers, and was buried in Samaria: and Ahab his son reigned in his stead.

29 ¶ And in the thirty and eighth year of Asa king of Judah began Ahab the son of Omri to reign over Israel: and Ahab the son of Omri reigned over Israel in Samaria twenty and two years.

30 And Ahab the son of Omri did evil in the sight of the LORD above all that *were* before him.

31 And it came to pass, ² as if it had been a light thing for him to walk in the sins of Jeroboam the

¹ Heb. *Shomeron*. ² Heb. *was it a light thing*, etc.

ance can be removed by translating, *So Tibni died, and Omri reigned in the thirty-first year of Asa, king of Judah. Omri reigned over Israel twelve years.* This makes the twelve years to cover all the time from the twenty-seventh year of Asa, including the four years' war with Tibni. But Omri's sole reign began in the thirty-first year. The dates in these histories are sadly confused, owing possibly to the abbreviations in the original text, and the consequent mistakes of transcribers. *Six years reigned he in Tirzah*: Shechem had been the original capital; but Jeroboam, before his death, changed his residence to Tirzah, probably on account of its beauty (see 14: 17; Solomon's Song 6: 4). Its site is unknown.

24. *The hill Samaria*: This hill, on which the city of Samaria was built, is six miles north-west of Shechem, in the midst of a valley surrounded by high hills. The hill is oblong in shape, with a flat top. It combined the beauty and strength desirable for a royal residence. Samaria is the Greek form of the name; the Hebrew being Shomeron, meaning a watch-post. *After the name of Shemer, owner of the hill*: In the strange mixture of names of persons and things in the Old Testament, we find here a name which belongs appropriately to the place applied to the owner, and only through him to the place. Very likely the process of the king in naming the place was reversed in the original use of the names; the name being given to the place on account of its elevation, and then to the owner. Samaria became thus the capital of the northern kingdom, a position that it did not lose; and eventually the name came to be applied to the kingdom itself.

25. *And did worse than all that were before him*: There is a passage in the prophet Micah (6: 16) which shows that the pre-eminent wickedness of Omri was proverbial in the last days of the kingdom, two hundred years later, and that this wickedness was embodied by him in the law of the land.

26. *For he walked*: And he walked. *The sin of Jeroboam*: The calf-worship and all that was connected with it. *The Lord God of Israel*: Jehovah, the God of Israel. *Their vanities*: Their idols, which were called vain things on account of their nothingness.

27. *His might*: Or valor. *Book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel*: Not our books of Chronicles, which contain references to the same; but the annals of each reign, which were written out by some scribe, and deposited in the public archives,—the official records.

29. *Twenty and two years*: By comparing together 22: 41 and 22: 51, we get twenty to twenty-one years as the length of this reign.

31. *The sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat*: The calf-worship, which was, as we have seen, a worship of Jehovah, but a departure from the spiritual worship that he

son of Nebat, that he took to wife Jezebel the daughter of Ethbaal king of the Zidonians, and went and served Baal, and worshipped him.

32 And he reared up an altar for Baal in the house of Baal, which he had built in Samaria.

33 And Ahab made a grove; and Ahab did more to provoke the LORD

God of Israel to anger than all the kings of Israel that were before him.

34 In his days did Hiel the Bethelite build Jericho: he laid the foundation thereof in Abiram his first-born, and set up the gates thereof in his youngest son Segub, according to the word of the LORD, which he spake by Joshua the son of Nun.

required, and the substitution for it of an image-worship. *Jezebel the daughter of Ethbaal king of the Zidonians:* He was king of both Tyre and Sidon, and before his reign had been a priest of Ashoreth. This belonging to a priestly family throws light on Jezebel's fierce zeal for her religion, which makes so tragical an element in Ahab's reign. It makes an interesting connection with profane history, that this Jezebel was probably great-aunt of Dido, who founded Carthage, and who appears in Virgil's *Aeneid*. *And went and served Baal:* The god of the Phoenician and Canaanitish nations, whose worship was the great sin of the Israelites. As they were planted right in the midst of the Canaanites, they were subject to continual temptation to this more sensuous worship. After the reformation under Samuel, there seems to have been some improvement in this respect, especially owing to the lift given to the worship of Jehovah during the reigns of David and Solomon; but there never was any thing more than a temporary and superficial abandonment of idolatry, until the captivity. What makes this notable was not the presence of idolatry among the people, but its adoption by the king. That makes a notable event in the history of the monarchy. This was distinctly the worship of another god, not a false worship of Jehovah.

33. *And Ahab made a grove:* An Asherah. The word has been variously interpreted; but probably it denotes a wooden pillar, intended to symbolize in a gross way the reproductive power in nature. This was connected with the worship of Ashtoreth, and was placed near the altar of Baal.

34. *In his days did Hiel the Bethelite build Jericho:* Joshua had pronounced a curse from the Lord on any one who should attempt to rebuild Jericho. Probably, as Bethel belonged to the northern kingdom, and as this is mentioned in connection with the sins of Ahab, it is implied that this was done with his sanction, and as a mark of his provoking the Lord to anger. *He laid the foundation thereof in Abiram his firstborn:* This is, of course, a rhetorical account of the death of his two sons as a judgment on him. The language is quoted from the prophecy in Josh. 6: 26.

LESSON IV.

ELIJAH THE TISHBITE.—1 Kings 17:1-16.

A GENERAL VIEW.—The narrative begins abruptly here. No description is given of Elijah, no indication even of his prophetic office: neither are we told why the dew and rain were to cease. But when Elijah appears again before the king, and the king charges the prophet with causing this trouble, then Elijah gives the king to understand that it is his sin that has caused it. While it is not stated, therefore, that there is any connection between the famine and the sin of Ahab so summarily stated in the preceding verses, the one is the cause of the other. And the absence of any description of Elijah is made up by the statement in 2 Kings 1: 8, that he was a hairy man, and girded with a leathern girdle; that is, he was the predecessor of John the Baptist, with the uncut hair and coarse clothing that belonged to the wilderness life: for Elijah is the prophet of a troublous time,

when righteousness is driven out from the places of men's resort, to the hiding-places of the earth. And this was not simply the result of the exigencies of his time, but was a life to which he took naturally, as an inhabitant of the region across the Jordan; for Gilead, the country east of the river, was pasture-land, and the tribes that remained there retained, with their flocks and herds, the rude, wandering habits of the children of the desert. But, in order to get a picture of Elijah before us, we have to see him not only in the light of this rude origin and life, but in the contrasts of Ahab's court. For in this alliance with the court of the Phœnician king, Ahab was introducing into Israel foreign manners and elegances, and a civilization far superior to his own; and the contrast between the proud and gently nurtured Jezebel and the rough, stern prophet must have been striking.

1 And ¹ Elijah the Tishbite, *who was of the inhabitants of Gilead*, said unto Ahab, *As the LORD God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word.*

2 And the word of the LORD came unto him, saying,

3 Get thee hence, and turn thee eastward, and hide thyself by the the brook Cherith, that *is* before Jordan.

4 And it shall be, *that thou shalt drink of the brook; and I have commanded the ravens to feed thee there.*

5 So he went and did according unto the word of the LORD: for he went and dwelt by the brook Cherith that *is* before Jordan.

6 And the ravens brought him bread and flesh in the morning, and bread and flesh in the evening; and he drank of the brook.

7 And it came to pass ² after a while, that the brook dried up, because there had been no rain in the land.

8 ¶ And the word of the LORD came unto him, saying,

9 Arise, get thee to Zarephath, which *belongeth* to Zidon, and dwell there: behold, I have commanded a widow woman there to sustain thee.

¹ Heb. *Elijahu*. Luke 1:17, and 4:25, he is called *Elias*. ² Heb. *at the end of days*.

NOTES.—1. *Elijah the Tishbite, who was of the inhabitants of Gilead*: In the original, Tishbite and inhabitants are spelled the same. Moreover, the word for *inhabitants* has another letter than the one so translated here; and, finally, it does not mean *inhabitants*, but *sojourners*,—persons resident in a place for a longer or shorter time, but not belonging there. Probably it should read, *Elijah the Tishbite from Tishbi in Gilead*. The location is unknown. Gilead is, strictly speaking, the country allotted to Gad, east of the Jordan, but the name is popularly applied to the trans-Jordanic country between the Sea of Tiberias and the Dead Sea. *Before whom I stand*: A phrase meaning *whom I serve* (see note on 12:8, Lesson I.). *But according to my word*: He does not mean at his command, but according to his prediction. When the rain came, he was sent to predict it to the king.

3. *Get thee hence, and turn thee eastward*: He was in Samaria, at the court of the king; and this was a command to hide himself from the anger of the king, aroused by his bold prediction. Probably the phrase *before the Jordan* indicates that it was east of the river. *The brook Cherith*: The mountain torrents, or wadys, in Palestine were fed by the rains, and were very apt to dry up in the hot season. Such a torrent is meant here.

4. *Thou shalt drink of the brook; and I have commanded the ravens to feed thee*: God provides for his sustenance in such a way as to make any intercourse with men unnecessary. It is possible to translate the word for *ravens* here, *Arabians*. But it is improbable that they would expose themselves to detection by coming twice a day (verse 6); and, besides, the other is more in accordance with the supernatural coloring of the whole story.

9. *Arise, get thee to Zarephath*: His water-supply had been cut off, necessitating a change; and now the Lord sends him in the other direction, to the extreme north-west.

10 So he arose and went to Zarephath. And when he came to the gate of the city, behold, the widow woman was there gathering of sticks; and he called to her, and said, Fetch me, I pray thee, a little water in a vessel, that I may drink.

11 And as she was going to fetch it, he called to her, and said, Bring me, I pray thee, a morsel of bread in thine hand.

12 And she said, As the LORD thy God liveth, I have not a cake, but a handful of meal in a barrel, and a little oil in a cruse; and behold, I am gathering two sticks, that

I may go in and dress it for me and my son, that we may eat it, and die.

13 And Elijah said unto her, Fear not; go and do as thou hast said: but make me thereof a little cake first, and bring it unto me, and after make for thee and for thy son.

14 For thus saith the LORD God of Israel, The barrel of meal shall not waste, neither shall the cruse of oil fail, until the day that the LORD sendeth rain upon the earth.

15 And she went and did according to the saying of Elijah: and she, and he, and her house, did eat² many days.

¹ Heb. giveth. ² Or, a full year.

Zarephath, the New-Testament Sarepta, is in Syro-Phœnicia, between Tyre and Sidon, and on the road skirting the coast that connects the two. This hiding in Sidonian territory had this advantage, that no one would suspect his presence there.

10. *Behold, the widow woman:* A widow woman. The identification of her as the widow indicated by the Lord comes afterwards. It would be made known by her willingness to supply his wants out of her need, and eventually by her faith. *Fetch me a little water:* It was a time when the scarcity of water made all the other trouble; hence, the modest request of Elijah tested her hospitality.

11. *A morsel of bread in thine hand:* The lack of rain had by this time made a famine of food in the land, and the request for even a morsel of bread would be a severe test of a poor woman, a widow, gathering sticks.

12. *As the Lord thy God liveth:* As Jehovah thy God liveth. The woman was evidently a Phenician woman, as the Jews had not penetrated into Syro-Phœnicia. It has been supposed that this is a recognition of Jehovah as the true God, implying that she was a Jewess, or at any rate a proselyte; but the language implies just the opposite: she says, Jehovah thy God. The recognition of Jehovah as a god is not singular in a heathen woman, as the idea of heathenism is polytheism. Moreover, in our Lord's use of this incident, he certainly regards the woman as a heathen (Luke 4: 24-27). *I have not a cake:* Bread was made in the shape of flat cakes. *A handful of meal in a barrel, a little oil in a cruse:* The barrel here is the vessel ordinarily used to draw water from a well, and the word is better rendered *bucket*. The cruse is a globular vessel, made of earthen ware, having a narrow neck, a handle, and a straight spout. The use of olive oil in the preparation of food is very common in the East. *That we may eat it, and die:* It was the last that she had, and after it, there was only death to look forward to.

13. *Make me thereof a little cake first:* This is the supreme test of the woman's faith. Elijah himself was evidently a man of faith, a seer; and the power of such men to impress others with their faith depends on the capacity for spiritual impression that they find in men. This case of the Syro-Phœnician woman shows that such faith may exist even among false religions, though it is a rare and abnormal growth (see Matt. 15: 21-28).

14. *Until the day that the Lord sendeth rain upon the earth:* Here there is a call for something more than mere general belief in supernatural powers. It is Jehovah, the God of Israel, who is to be recognized as the giver of food and the sender of rain.

15. *Did eat many days:* The phrase is translated in the margin *a full year*; and this is the meaning of the Hebrew word. But this limits the time, when it is more probable that the larger part of the time of the famine — three years and a half — was spent

16 *And the barrel of meal wasted | fail, according to the word of the not, neither did the cruse of oil | LORD, which he spake ¹ by Elijah.*

¹ *Heb. by the hand of.*

by Elijah in Sarepta. The New Testament says in two places that the drought lasted three years and a half, and in this case the *third year* in 18:1 must refer to the time of Elijah's stay with the widow (Luke 4:25; Jas. 5:17). It is not by any means an insignificant feature of this narrative that Elijah was made to depend, during two years and more of his exile from Israel on a devotee of the religion, for his opposition to which he was in hiding.

LESSON V.

ELIJAH MEETING AHAB.—1 Kings 18:1-18.

A GENERAL VIEW.—The famine in Israel came to an end, as it had begun, at the word of the Lord by Elijah; but its end was brought about in such a way as to impress on the nation, even more than its announcement and progress, the fact that it was Jehovah's judgment on them for their worship of false gods. The king, with the "mayor of the palace," an officer of high rank, had gone out to make a personal inspection of the land, and find any remnants of herbage that might be left still by the springs and brooks, to keep the cattle from starving; for the famine was sore in the land. Just at this time Elijah appeared again, commissioned to announce that the Lord, whose judgment had withheld the rain, would send it again, and inspired also to show the emptiness of the Baal worship. He had been in hiding over three years, and meantime the king had been searching for him through all the surrounding countries, and putting their kings under oath to deliver him up if they found him; and now he suddenly re-appears, and, in spite of the remonstrances of the loyal Obadiah, he demands that the king be sent for to meet him. His hiding had an appearance of weakness about it; but, when he meets Ahab, he asserts the ascendancy of the man of God over the king, so that the meaning of the three years' famine was burned into his mind.

1 *And it came to pass after many days, that the word of the LORD came to Elijah in the third year, saying, Go, shew thyself unto Ahab; and I will send rain upon the earth.*

2 *And Elijah went to shew him-*

self unto Ahab. And there was a sore famine in Samaria.

3 *And Ahab called ¹ Obadiah, which was ² the governor of his house. Now Obadiah feared the Lord greatly:*

¹ *Heb. Obadiahu.* ² *Heb. over his house.*

NOTES.—1. *In the third year:* Of his hiding in Zarephath (see note on 17:15, Lesson IV.). *And I will send rain upon the earth* (see Jer. 14:22): *Upon the ground* translates the language better.

2. *And there was a sore famine:* And the famine was strong, or violent. The adjective denotes not so much the oppressiveness of the famine, as its power. **In Samaria:** In chapter 13; 32; 21:1, Samaria is used of the kingdom, and not the city, a use that evidently belongs to the later time in which the book was written, and not to the time about which it writes; and it seems probable that this is the meaning here, though it is possible that it means that the severity of the famine in the royal city caused them to go out over the land to seek food for their animals.

3. *Obadiah, which was the governor of his house:* The marginal rendering is *over his house.* The officer who had charge of the palace and the royal household, with

4 For it was so, when ¹ Jezebel cut off the prophets of the Lord, that Obadiah took an hundred prophets, and hid them by fifty in a cave, and fed them with bread and water.)

5 And Ahab said unto Obadiah, Go into the land, unto all fountains of water, and unto all brooks: peradventure we may find grass to save the horses and mules alive, ² that we lose not all the beasts.

6 So they divided the land between them to pass throughout it: Ahab went one way by himself, and Obadiah went another way by himself.

7 ¶ And as Obadiah was in the way, behold, Elijah met him: and he

knew him, and fell on his face, and said, Art thou that my lord Elijah?

8 And he answered him, I am: go, tell thy lord, Behold, Elijah is here.

9 And he said, What have I sinned, that thou wouldest deliver thy servant into the hand of Ahab, to slay me?

10 As the LORD thy God liveth, there is no nation or kingdom, whither my lord hath not sent to seek thee: and when they said, He is not there; he took an oath of the kingdom and nation, that they found thee not.

11 And now thou sayest, Go, tell thy lord, Behold, Elijah is here.

¹ Heb. *Izebel*. ² Heb. *that we cut not off ourselves from the beasts*.

its retinue of attendants, was high in rank and personally near the king. *Now Obadiah feared the Lord greatly*: This is inserted here to explain the scene with Elijah. It is an indication that the king, in establishing Baal worship, did not himself reject nor ostracise the worship of Jehovah, that he should have one of his devout worshippers near his own person. The cutting off of the prophets of the Lord narrated in the next verse was not owing probably to their worship of Jehovah, but to their denunciation of the Baal worship. Polytheism is tolerant of any worship, but not of any opposition to itself.

4. *For it was so*: And it came to pass. *The prophets of the Lord*: The prophets were the inspired religious teachers of the nation; but the term includes probably many who were educated in the school of the prophets, but who did not receive the inspiration necessary to fit them for the office. (See 2 Kings 2: 3, 5; 4: 38; 6: 1; where the term *sons* denotes *disciples*.)

5. *Fountains of water, and . . . brooks*: Streams fed by perennial springs, and those fed by the rains, which dried up after the rainy season, are meant. *Peradventure we may find*: This close search for grass, and the doubt about finding it after all, indicate the severity of the famine. *That we lose not all the beasts*: Lose not of the beasts.

6. *By himself*: Apart from each other, but not unattended.

7. *He fell on his face*: As a follower of Jehovah, Obadiah recognizes Elijah's superiority, in spite of his own higher official position. *Art thou that my lord Elijah?* Art thou here, my Lord Elijah? His addressing the prophet as lord is another note of his extreme deference for him. The question denotes his surprise at the presence of the outlawed prophet.

8. *Behold, Elijah is here*: In the original, it is simply, *Behold, Elijah*, which is much stronger. The answer must have added to Obadiah's astonishment. Elijah is not only here, but he wishes the message carried to the king.

9. *What have I sinned, that thou wouldest deliver*: That thou givest. The way in which he feared that this would come about is given in verse 12. After he had informed the king of the presence of the hated Elijah, the prophet would be caught away by the Spirit of the Lord; and the king, not finding him, would slay the man who had seemed to deceive him with false tidings.

10. *There is no nation or kingdom*: That is, none of which the king could exact, either through friendship or force, such an oath as is described in the latter part of the verse. This shows how eager the king was to lay his hands on the man who seemed to

12 And it shall come to pass, as soon as I am gone from thee, that the Spirit of the LORD shall carry thee whither I know not; and so when I come and tell Ahab, and he cannot find thee, he shall slay me: but I thy servant fear the LORD from my youth.

13 Was it not told my lord what I did when Jezebel slew the prophets of the LORD, how I hid an hundred men of the LORD's prophets by fifty in a cave, and fed them with bread and water?

14 And now thou sayest, Go, tell thy lord, Behold, Elijah is here: and he shall slay me.

be the author of the calamity from which the land was suffering, and how disappointed and angry it would make him, to have his hopes raised only to be dashed again.

12. *The Spirit of the Lord shall carry thee I know not whither:* This may mean either that the Spirit would transport him supernaturally to some unknown place, or simply that it would lead him away by some strong impulse. The former is apparently the meaning in 2 Kings 2:16; and the latter in Ezek. 3:12-14; Matt. 4:1; Acts 8:39. In Ezek. 8:3, the reference is to a vision in which the spirit was transported to a certain place, but not the body. In the absence of any evidence or certain indication of the reference to a supernatural carrying, it probably denotes the leading simply. *But I . . . fear the Lord from my youth:* He adduces this as a reason why he should be spared such an exposure to the wrath of the king.

15. *As the Lord of hosts liveth:* As Jehovah of hosts liveth. The hosts are the armies of heaven, the angels. On the phrase "before whom I stand," see on 12:8, Lesson I.; it means "whom I serve."

17. *Art thou he that troubleth Israel?* Art thou here, that troublest Israel? It is an expression of surprise that he should dare to show himself after bringing famine on the land.

18. *I have not troubled Israel; but thou, and thy father's house:* It is not the prophet who denounces evil on a sinful nation or ruler, that can be said to cause its evil, but the person or people that commits the sin. *And thou hast followed Baalim:* Baalim is the plural of Baal, and denotes the several forms under which the god was worshipped in different localities, such as Baal-ze-bub, the Beelzebub of the New Testament; Baal-peor, and the like. Elijah's boldness before the king is one of the striking things about this story.

15 And Elijah said, *As the Lord of hosts liveth, before whom I stand, I will surely shew myself unto him to day.*

16 So Obadiah went to meet Ahab, and told him: and Ahab went to meet Elijah.

17 And it came to pass, when Ahab saw Elijah, that Ahab said unto him, *Art thou he that troubleth Israel?*

18 And he answered, I have not troubled Israel; but thou, and thy father's house, in that ye have forsaken the commandments of the LORD, and thou hast followed Baalim.

LESSON VI.

THE PROPHETS OF BAAL.—1 Kings 18:19-29.

A GENERAL VIEW.—Elijah had prophesied the famine, had retreated from the wrath of the king and of Jezebel, and at the word of the Lord had appeared to Ahab again, and charged him with being the guilty cause of the famine, of which he was himself only the prophet. But it was evident that his work was not accomplished yet. The king and the people might still say that while it was proved that Jehovah was a god, which, in fact, they never doubted, it still remained to be proved that Baal was no god. And this is the question which Elijah now proposes to put to the diretest kind of test, so that it shall be

19 Now therefore send, and gather to me all Israel unto mount Carmel, and the prophets of Baal four hundred and fifty, and the prophets of the groves four hundred, which eat at Jezebel's table.

20 So Ahab sent unto all the children of Israel, and gathered the prophets together unto mount Carmel.

21 And Elijah came unto all the people, and said, How long halt ye between two ¹opinions? if the LORD be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him. And the people answered him not a word.

22 Then said Elijah unto the people, I, even I only, remain a prophet of the LORD; but Baal's prophets are four hundred and fifty men.

¹ Or, thoughts.

unmistakably shown that Jehovah is God, and that Baal is no god. For this purpose he avails himself of the ascendancy that he has acquired over the king by the fearlessness of his demeanor, and orders him to summon the people, and the four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal, and four hundred prophets of Asherah, to Mount Carmel. Why he chose this site, we cannot tell. It was not central, and possibly he did not wish it to be; but it is said to be one of the most striking and picturesque objects in Palestine. It is a wooded ridge twelve miles long, the north-western end of which makes the only headland along the coast, and the southern shore of the only bay. It is not only thickly and beautifully wooded, but profusely decorated with brilliant flowers. Its name is meant to describe this beauty, Carmel meaning *park*. But while this adds to the picturesqueness of the most dramatic scene in Old-Testament history, it was not probably the reason of the prophet's choice. That was more likely owing to the outlook that it afforded the prophet to watch for the coming clouds. At any rate, the prophet ordered the people to be gathered here to see which deity would answer by fire, and so prove himself the true God.

NOTES. — 19. *All Israel*: As distinguished from Judah. The ten tribes forming the northern kingdom. *The prophets of Baal*: In the Jewish system the prophets and priests were distinguished from each other; but in the heathen systems the priests were the prophets, that is, the religious teachers of the people. Properly speaking, they were priests, the ministers of a ritual service; but here the term *prophet* is used to bring out the correspondence between them and the prophet of Jehovah. *The prophets of the groves*: Of Asherah (see note on 16:33, Lesson III.). *Which eat at Jezebel's table*: From Jezebel's table. They were supplied with food from the queen's table.

20. *And gathered the prophets together unto mount Carmel*: Tradition has preserved the probable site of the gathering at the south-eastern end of the ridge, at the point nearest to Jezreel. The Arabian name of the place signifies *the burning, or the sacrifice*. The wood for the sacrifice would be found anywhere on the ridge; but here was an unfailing spring of water not to be found elsewhere in this time of drought, and a convenient place for the gathering of the people.

21. *How long halt ye between two opinions?* Elijah's whole endeavor was directed to forcing the people to choose between Jehovah and Baal, instead of occupying a position between them, calling both gods, and serving one or the other, as chance dictated. *If the Lord be God*: If Jehovah be God. Elijah's alternative is one God or the other. He does not admit two gods. *The people answered him not a word*: They were unwilling to accept the prophet's alternative, as their creed was several gods; and they preferred Baal with his sensuous worship to the strictness and moral requirements of the worship of Jehovah, especially as the former was now the religion of the court.

22. *I only remain a prophet of the Lord*: That is, the only one remaining in the performance of his office. The rest were hiding away from the cruelty of Jezebel. Elijah emphasizes this in order to enhance the value of his victory over the prophets of Baal, to which he looked forward so confidently.

23 Let them therefore give us two bullocks; and let them choose one bullock for themselves, and cut it in pieces, and lay it on wood, and put no fire *under*: and I will dress the other bullock, and lay it on wood, and put no fire *under*:

24 And call ye on the name of your gods, and I will call on the name of the *Lord*: and the God that answereth by fire, let him be God. And all the people answered and said, ¹ It is well spoken.

25 And Elijah said unto the prophets of Baal, Choose you one bullock for yourselves, and dress it first; for ye are many; and call on the name of your gods, but put no fire *under*.

26 And they took the bullock which was given them, and they dressed it, and called on the name of Baal from morning even until noon, saying, O Baal, ² hear us. But *there was no voice*, nor any that ³ answered. And they ⁴ leaped upon the altar which was made.

27 And it came to pass at noon, that Elijah mocked them, and said, Cry ⁵ aloud: for he *is* a god; either ⁶ he is talking, or he ⁷ is pursuing, or he is in a journey, *or* peradventure he sleepeth, and must be awaked.

28 And they cried aloud, and cut themselves after their manner with knives and lancets, till ⁸ the blood gushed out upon them.

¹ Heb. *The word is good*. ² Or, *answer*. ³ Or, *heard*. ⁴ Or, *leaped up and down at the altar*. ⁵ Heb. *with a great voice*. ⁶ Or, *he meditateth*. ⁷ Heb. *hath a pursuit*. ⁸ Heb. *poured out blood upon them*.

23. *Let them therefore give us two bullocks; and let them choose one bullock*: Elijah is careful to arrange it so that there shall be no appearance of unfair advantage. The bullocks were to be given them, and the prophets of Baal were to choose theirs, leaving him the other. *And I will dress the other bullock*: Sacrifice the other.

24. *And call ye on the name of your gods*: Your god; that is, Baal. *And I will call on the name of the Lord*: Of Jehovah. *The God that answereth by fire*: God had done this before; e.g., when David made his offering to stay the plague, and when Solomon dedicated the temple (see 1 Chron. 21: 36; 2 Chron. 7: 1, 3). *It is well spoken*: The word is good. They were unwilling to decide the matter for themselves, but they were willing to have it decided for them in this exciting and spectacular manner.

25. *Dress it first*: Sacrifice first. *For ye are many*: There was a certain advantage in coming last in this trial, since defeat would be less noticed, and triumph more, in that position; and Elijah gives as a reason for their conceding him this, that they are many against one. *Your gods*: Your god (see on verse 24).

26. *And they dressed it*: And sacrificed. *O Baal, hear us*: Answer us. Probably this was the refrain, continually repeated, of an invocation addressed to their god. *But there was no voice, nor any that answered*: See Ps. 115:5, 8; Jer. 10: 5. *They leaped upon the altar*: They leaped up and down at the altar. This frenzied dancing is characteristic of Eastern worship, especially as an expression of excited feeling. The continued failure of response worked their feelings up, and from shouting they went to dancing.

27. *Elijah mocked them*: In the spirit characteristic of Hebrew prophecy, which was continually mocking and satirizing the nullity and futility of idol-worship (see especially Isa. 44: 8-20). *Cry aloud*: With a great voice. He incites them to redouble their much speaking and their vain repetitions, for which, or by which, they expect to make themselves heard. *Either he is talking, or he is pursuing*: For he is meditating, or he is gone aside. The first verb may mean either meditating or talking; and the former is preferable, since meditation *would prevent hearing, rather than talking*. The second verb means that he has retired, or gone aside for something. These are representations in accordance with the ordinary anthropomorphic heathen conceptions of their gods. Their actions and failings were those of men.

28. *And they cried aloud*: With a loud voice. Elijah's ironical incitements proved

29 And it came to pass, when mid-day was past, and they prophesied until the time of the ¹offering of the ^{evening} sacrifice, that *there was* neither voice, nor any to answer, nor any ²that regarded.

¹ Heb. *ascending*. ² Heb. *attention*.

effective. *Cut themselves with knives and lancets*: And lances, or spears. This cutting gashes in their bodies, like the dancing, is another part of the rude and wild Oriental method of expressing religious feelings. It is attributable partly to frenzy, but partly also to the crude sacrificial ideas of the times, that the gods are pleased with mere suffering and blood, and receive it in expiation of any offence against them. It marks the climax of their frenzied feelings.

29. *And they prophesied until the offering . . . of the evening sacrifice, that*: That they prophesied until the offering . . . and. By *prophesied* is meant the utterance of speech under the influence of religious feeling, or any frenzied utterance (see 1 Sam. 18: 10; 2 Kings 9: 11; Jer. 29: 26). In the nobler use of the word, it denotes speech under a divine influence; but it ranges all the way from this to the raving of a madman. The mixture of ideas by which inspiration and madness are connected is found in all languages.

LESSON VII.

THE PROPHET OF THE LORD.—1 Kings 18:30-46.

A GENERAL VIEW.—There are several things to be noted in this lesson. First, that Elijah used an altar of the Lord, belonging, evidently, to the old worship of the high places, which was abolished at the time of building the temple. This affords a hint of the way in which the question of worship in the northern kingdom might have been adjusted, if Jeroboam had not taken the matter into his own hands. Second, that Elijah rebuilt the altar of twelve stones, according to the number of the tribes, so signifying the religious unity of the nation, which God did not mean should be interrupted by the broken political unity. Third, that he manifested distinctly the spirit of the old dispensation in commanding the prophets of Baal to be slain, the same spirit for which Jesus rebuked his disciples before the village of Samaria. Fourth, that he felt so sure that the submission of the people to Jehovah would bring the rain, that he heard the noise of a great rain before a cloud was to be seen; and, when a cloud like a man's hand was seen, he warned Ahab of a tempest. And, fifth, the picture of Elijah with his leathern girdle buckled tightly around him, and the hand of the Lord upon him, outstripping the horses attached to the chariot of Ahab in their flight before the storm over the fifteen miles that lay between Carmel and Jezreel, is a fitting climax to the wonderful story.

30 And Elijah said unto all the people, Come near unto me. And all the people came near unto him. And he repaired the altar of the LORD that was broken down.

31 And Elijah took twelve stones, according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Jacob, unto whom the word of the LORD came, saying, Israel shall be thy name:

NOTES.—30. *Come near unto me*: He calls the people off from watching the unsuccessful attempts of the priests of Baal, and during the little time left before the evening sacrifice he fastens their attention on him. *The altar of the Lord that was broken down*: There had been no stated place for worship before the building of the temple at Jerusalem, and these altars were erected on all the high places through the land. They had been thrown down, however; probably by the order of the king at the same time that the prophets of the Lord were cut off (see 18: 4, 13; 19: 10).

31. *According to the number of the tribes of the sons of Jacob*: Every thing in the narrative indicates that the division of the kingdom was according to the word of Jehovah, and there is no sign that it was considered a sin; but the separation from

32 And with the stones he built an altar in the name of the LORD; and he made a trench about the altar, as great as would contain two measures of seed.

33 And he put the wood in order, and cut the bullock in pieces, and laid *him* on the wood, and said, Fill four barrels with water, and pour *it* on the burnt sacrifice, and on the wood.

34 And he said, Do *it* the second time. And they did *it* the second time. And he said, Do *it* the third time. And they did *it* the third time.

35 And the water¹ ran round about

the altar; and he filled the trench also with water.

36 And it came to pass at the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice, that Elijah the prophet came near, and said, LORD God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, let it be known this day that thou art God in Israel, and that I am thy servant, and that I have done all these things at thy word.

37 Hear me, O LORD, hear me, that this people may know that thou art the LORD God, and that thou hast turned their heart back again.

38. Then the fire of the LORD fell, and consumed the burnt sacrifice,

¹ Heb. *went*.

Judah in the pure worship of the one God, and the setting up first of the calf-worship, and then of the Baal worship, the former being intended to emphasize and perpetuate the separation, was a sin. The twelve stones were intended to remind the people of this religious unity of the divided nation, and of the sin of breaking it up. *Unto whom the word of the Lord came, saying, Israel shall be thy name* (see Gen. 32: 28; 35: 10): The author here, in putting a meaning into Elijah's act, recalls the fact that this name Israel, by which the ten tribes of the northern kingdom styled themselves, belonged originally to the ancestor of the entire people, and that it was a name by which the connection of the people with God was signalized; and yet here they were breaking away altogether from that sacred relation, while appropriating to themselves a name belonging to the people of God.

32. *And he made a trench about the altar*: To hold the water poured over the sacrifice, so that the altar should be surrounded by water, and the impressiveness of the final scene be increased. *Two measures of seed*: The measure meant here is about three gallons.

33. *Four barrels*: Four pitchers or jars, such as they used in carrying water on the head. (See Gen. 24: 14-20, where the same word is used.)

34. *Do it the second time . . . and the third time*: So as to completely soak the firewood and the sacrifice, and fill the trench.

36. *At the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice*: Probably three o'clock. *O Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel*: O Jehovah, the God. This addressing Jehovah as the God of their fathers was intended to bring back the people to a sense of God's claim on them, and to a remembrance of that wonderful national history over which God had presided. In breaking away from him, they were breaking with that wonderful past. *And that I am thy servant, and that I have done all these things at thy word*: They still acknowledged Jehovah in a certain way; but the question to be decided that day was, whether Elijah represented him truly in claiming for him an exclusive worship, and in denouncing the worship of Baal. Was Jehovah, unlike the heathen gods, a jealous God?

37. *That thou art the Lord God*: That thou, Jehovah, art the God. *And that thou hast turned their heart back again*: Thou mayest turn. A part of the object of God's hearing him.

38. *Then the fire of the Lord fell*: Not lightning, since there were no clouds at this time, but a supernatural fire. Moreover, it consumed not only the perishable wood and flesh, but the solid stones and earth (dust), of which the altar was built, and the water. *Dust*: Earth, with which the stone frame, or wall, of the altar was filled.

and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench.

39 And when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces: and they said, The LORD, he is the God; the LORD, he is the God.

40 And Elijah said unto them, Take the prophets of Baal; let not one of them escape. And they took them: and Elijah brought them down to the brook Kishon, and slew them there.

41 ¶ And Elijah said unto Ahab, Get thee up, eat and drink; for there is a ² sound of abundance of rain.

42 So Ahab went up to eat and to drink. And Elijah went up to the top of Carmel; and he cast himself down upon the earth, and put his face between his knees,

43 And said to his servant, Go up now, look toward the sea. And he went up, and looked, and said, There is nothing. And he said, Go again seven times.

44 And it came to pass at the seventh time, that he said, Behold, there ariseth a little cloud out of the sea, like a man's hand. And he said, Go up, say unto Ahab, ³ Prepare thy chariot, and get thee down, that the rain stop thee not.

45 And it came to pass in the mean while, that the heaven was black with clouds and wind, and there was a great rain. And Ahab rode, and went to Jezreel.

46 And the hand of the LORD was on Elijah; and he girded up his loins, and ran before Ahab ⁴ to the entrance of Jezreel.

¹ Or, Apprehend. ² Or, a sound of a noise of rain. ³ Heb. Tie, or, Bind. ⁴ Heb. till thou come to Jezreel.

39. *The Lord, he is the God:* Jehovah, he is the God. The people are convinced; and yet it is only a temporary conviction that such a display wrought, or will ever work. They flashed out into a temporary enthusiasm, that exhausted itself in slaying the prophets of Baal. But when the Lord appears to Elijah at Horeb, the encouragement that he brings is not that the people have turned from following Baal, but that there are seven thousand left that have not bowed the knee to Baal.

40. *Take the prophets of Baal:* The test of their returning loyalty is as primitive, it belongs as distinctly to the old order of things that has passed away, as the test of the sole deity of Jehovah. Both are striking; but it is an evil and adulterous generation that seeks such signs, or such safeguards against evil. *The brook Kishon:* A river which, with its widespread tributaries, drains the plain of Esdrælon. The river itself flows parallel with the ridge of Carmel, and empties into the bay into which projects the northern end of the mountain. Probably Elijah slew the prophets on its bank, in order to throw their bodies into the stream, which the coming storm would turn into a fierce torrent.

41. *Get thee up, eat and drink:* The sacrifice was to be followed by a sacrificial feast, by partaking of which in the presence of the people Ahab would stand pledged to the service of Jehovah, whose triumph over Baal it celebrated. *For there is a sound of abundance of rain:* A reason for feasting, that had not been known in the land for three years. These premonitions of rain existed only in Elijah's prophetic soul.

42. *To the top of Carmel:* To a point near the summit, from which his servant went to the very top. *And he cast himself down upon the earth, and put his face between his knees:* An attitude of profound and absorbed prayer.

43. *Seven times:* A complete number.

44. *A little cloud out of the sea, like a man's hand:* A very small cloud on the horizon, which, however, is often a presage of a storm. *Prepare thy chariot:* Simply harness, omitting the words *thy chariot.* *That the rain stop thee not:* The rushing rain. He sees no ordinary rain, but a great storm coming.

46. *The hand of the Lord was on Elijah:* The inspiration and supernatural power under which he had been acting all day continued. Ahab urged his horses to their utmost speed to escape the storm, but Elijah outran them fifteen miles. He wished to hold himself ready to watch the king in this great crisis of the kingdom; and yet, with the characteristic caution of a child of the desert, he stayed outside the gates.

LESSON VIII.

ELIJAH AT HOREB.—1 Kings 19:1-18.

A GENERAL VIEW.—Elijah at Carmel is one of the most striking of the scenes and figures of Old-Testament history; but it would be incomplete, and misleading even, without the sequel at Horeb, the mount of God. The fierce and zealous prophet is there taught in a parable, that it is a partial and delusive view of God on which he has been acting. He must have come to Jezreel with the intention of following up his triumph over the prophets of Baal, and making the proud Jezebel feel the weight of the divine indignation; but, when the queen showed an undaunted and vengeful front, the spirit seems to have gone suddenly out of him, and he fled for his life into the wilderness. He had been upheld by a divine inspiration through the scenes of the preceding days; but in some way that was withdrawn, and he was left to feel his isolation and helplessness. Once in the wilderness, in the midst of its great solitudes, Jehovah appeared to him again, and taught him two lessons. First, that God is not in the wind, the earthquake and the fire,—the symbols of the power and wrath by which Elijah at Carmel had sought to convince the people that Jehovah is the true God,—but rather in the still small voice. There is no mistaking the lesson. It means that God does not establish his kingdom over men by the methods of force and wrath, but by the gentle persuasions of the truth. The second lesson is, that God's prophet must not be discouraged by the difficulties and delays that he meets in his work. There is a remnant left,—seven thousand men that have not bowed the knee to Baal. And Elijah is to go back to his work therefore, assured that he is not left alone; since the gracious and redeeming, if not the exacting and terrible, God is with him.

1 And Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done, and withal how he had slain all the prophets with the sword.

2 Then Jezebel sent a messenger unto Elijah, saying, So let the gods do to me, and more also, if I make not thy life as the life of one of them by to-morrow about this time.

3 And when he saw that, he arose,

and went for his life, and came to Beer-sheba, which *belongeth* to Judah, and left his servant there.

4 But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a juniper tree: and he requested ¹for himself that he might die; and said, It is enough; now, O LORD, take away my life; for I *am* not better than my fathers.

¹ Heb. *for his life.*

NOTES.—1. *Ahab told Jezebel*: Remember that Jezebel was a Phoenician princess, the daughter of the king of the Sidonians, who was himself a priest of Baal before he became king.

2. *So let the gods do to me, and more also*: On this form of oath, see Ruth 1:17; 2 Kings 6:31

3. *And when he saw that, he arose, and went for his life*: A very slight change in the Hebrew word would make the first clause read, *And he feared*, which certainly makes better sense. It is so translated in the Septuagint. *To Beersheba*: The southernmost place in the land, and right on the edge of the wilderness. It belonged originally to the tribe of Simeon; but as the district occupied by this tribe belonged territorially to the southern kingdom, it is said here to belong to Judah,—that is, the kingdom and not the tribe. *His servant*: Tradition says that he was the son of the Sidonian woman, restored by Elijah to life.

4. *A day's journey into the wilderness*: The wilderness of Arabia, stretching south of Palestine to Mount Sinai and the Red Sea. *Under a juniper tree*: Genista,

5 And as he lay and slept under a juniper tree, behold, then an angel touched him, and said unto him, Arise and eat.

6 And he looked, and, behold, there was a cake baken on the coals, and a cruse of water at his ¹ head. And he did eat and drink, and laid him down again.

7 And the angel of the LORD came again the second time, and touched him, and said, Arise and eat; because the journey is too great for thee.

8 And he arose, and did eat and drink, and went in the strength of

that meat forty days and forty nights unto Horeb the mount of God.

9 And he came thither unto a cave, and lodged there; and, behold, the word of the Lord came to him, and he said unto him, What doest thou here, Elijah?

10 And he said, I have been very jealous for the LORD God of hosts: for the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away.

¹ Heb. *bolster*.

or broom, more probably,—a shrub growing in the Arabian desert, with whitish flowers and a bitter root. *That he might die*: The fierce threat of Jezebel had taken out of him the courage and lofty spirit displayed on Carmel; and now the bold prophet seeks to die, rather than face the troubles of life. There is profound psychological truth in this contrast. The spirit that can be so exalted is equally liable to sudden and deep depression: or, rather, if we seek deeper into the cause of this, we shall find that there is always some miscalculation in the exalted mood that is so suddenly reversed, leading surely to disappointment and so to depression. In Elijah's case, as we have seen, he had in his mind the ordinary Jewish conception of God as a powerful king, victorious and vengeful, which caused the people so many disappointments. So he despaired of God's cause in the world sometimes, if he did not see it outwardly victorious. *I am not better than my fathers*: He sees that they have died, and gone to their place, without doing any thing great for God; and, though he seemed to have been on the verge of something better, he feels now that he is a weak man, like them, and that there is nothing but death left for him.

5. *Under a juniper tree*: A broom-shrub (see above).

6. *A cake baken on the coals*: Not a fire with a cake on it, but a cake that had been so baked. *A cruse of water*: See note on 17:12, Lesson IV.

7. *The angel . . . came again the second time*: It is implied, though not stated, that he brought food this time also. *Because the journey is too great for thee*: That is, the journey to Horeb, two hundred miles away, where God was to appear to him. It would be too great for him, unless he partook of this "angel's food."

8. *Went in the strength of that meat forty days*: With the exception, probably, of such food—locusts, roots, and the like—as the wilderness furnished. This was not a direct journey, which would have taken only ten days, but a wandering in the wilderness, where he could be alone with his thoughts. *The mount of God*: The place in which God manifested himself to Moses, and gave the law (see Ex. 3:1-12; 4:27; Deut. 4:10, 15; 29:1). Horeb and Sinai are interchanged in the biblical accounts of the same event, and are apparently substantially identical. The mountain is nine thousand feet high, and is in the southern part of the peninsula, lying between the two horns of the Red Sea.

9. *Unto a cave*: The cave, known probably to the writer, but not to us.

10. *I have been very jealous for the Lord God of hosts*: Not simply *jealous*, as some interpreters explain it, but *jealous*,—the feeling excited by defection from God, or by the lack of proper reverence and love for him. On the term *God of hosts*, see note on 18:15, Lesson V. *Have forsaken thy covenant*: The covenant contained in the law, according to which the nation pledged itself to obedience, and God to blessing. *Thrown down thine altars*: The one sanctuary prescribed in the law had existed only during the reign of David and Solomon, and of course was impossible after the divis-

11 And he said, Go forth, and stand upon the mount before the LORD. And, behold, the LORD passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks before the Lord; *but the LORD was not in the wind*: and after the wind an earthquake; *but the LORD was not in the earthquake.*

12 And after the earthquake a fire; *but the LORD was not in the fire*: and after the fire a still small voice.

13 And it was *so*, when Elijah heard *it*, that he wrapped his face in his mantle, and went out, and stood in the entering in of the cave. And,

behold, *there came* a voice unto him, and said, What doest thou here, Elijah?

14 And he said, I have been very jealous for the LORD God of hosts: because the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, *even I* only, am left; and they seek my life to take it away.

15 And the Lord said unto him, Go, return on thy way to the wilderness of Damascus: and when thou comest, anoint Hazael *to be king over Syria*:

ion of the kingdom. The many sacred places, with their altars, became the necessity of the northern kingdom, as it had been the custom of the whole nation. *They seek my life, to take it away*: Here was one secret of Elijah's despondency. Not simply the wrath of Jezebel, but the fickleness of a false people, made him afraid for his life.

11. *And, behold, the Lord passed by*: The Septuagint translates this *The Lord will pass by*; and so throughout the paragraph to verse 12; making this the announcement of the angel. This would show how Elijah would understand, or how it became known at all, that the Lord was not in the tempest, earthquake, or fire; but it makes a gap in the narrative, as it omits all mention of these things, outside of the announcement of the angel. It is possible to translate the Hebrew tenses so, and it is interesting to note it as a possible explanation of a difficulty. Notice that it says, "A great . . . wind rent the mountains . . . before the Lord," so distinguishing the wind from the Lord, and also the action of the wind from the passing by of the Lord. How striking it is to find embedded in this Old-Testament history this parable, teaching so exactly the spirit of the new dispensation just where it differs so radically from the old! But it illustrates the general truth, that there is no sharp line of division between the new and the old, but rather a change of emphasis, a growth out of one into the other. The lesson is plain, that the true manifestation of God is not to be found in the things that destroy, that show might and strict justice, but in the "sound of a gentle murmur," that typifies his mildness, the gentle influences of his healing spirit; not in the fire from heaven that destroys his enemies, but in the beneficent miracles of the Christ.

13. *He wrapped his face in his mantle*: Because he feared to behold God (see Ex. 3: 6; Is. 6: 2).

14. *And he said*: Elijah's answer is the same as to the angel. The Lord has manifested himself to the prophet in a way that shows us, reading it now, that Elijah's despondency is due to his misconception of God's ways; but it is not strange that he failed to see the meaning, and still asks for an explanation of the present state of things.

15. *Return on thy way to the wilderness of Damascus*: God does not answer the prophet's complainings. He leaves him to muse over the parable just enacted before him, and simply implies by his sending him back to take up his prophetic office, that his despair and flight are wrong. The wilderness of Damascus is probably the comparatively uninhabited district lying between the northern limits of Israel and Damascus. There the prophet would be comparatively safe, and at the same time within reach of his work.

Anoint Hazael to be king of Syria: Hazael was the servant of the present king, Benhadad II. Elijah does not seem to have fulfilled either of these first two commissions, but must have handed them over to Elisha his successor, who carried out both of them. (See 2 Kings 8: 7-15; 9: 1-6.)

16 And Jehu the son of Nimshi shalt thou anoint to be king over Israel: and Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abel-meholah shalt thou anoint to be prophet in thy room.

17 And it shall come to pass, that him that escapeth the sword of Hazael shall Jehu slay: and him that

escapeth from the sword of Jehu shall Elisha slay.

18 Yet ¹I have left me seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal, and every mouth which hath not kissed him.

¹Or, I will leave.

16. *Jehu the son of Nimshi*: His father's name was Jehoshaphat, and his grandfather's Nimshi (see 2 Kings 9: 2). He conspired against Jehoram, the son of Ahab, put him to death, and became king himself. *Elisha, the son of Shaphat, of Abel-meholah*: This place must have been in the northern part of the valley of the Jordan, in the vicinity of Beth-sheam (see 4: 2; Judges 7: 22). The name means *meadow of the dance* (see 19-21).

17. *Him that escapeth the sword of Hazael*: For an account of the destruction wrought in Israel by Hazael, see 2 Kings 8: 12, 28, 29; 9: 14, 15; 10: 32, 33; 13: 3. *Shall Jehu slay*: See 2 Kings 9: 24, 30-23; 10: 1-7, 18-25. *Shall Elisha slay*: Elisha was not, like Elijah, the prophet of wrath. This is not, therefore, to be taken literally, as if he himself slew the worshippers of Baal or others. The only slaying done by him was with the words of his mouth, as he pronounced the doom of wicked men (see Hos. 6: 5).

18. *Yet I have left me seven thousand*: Evidently the meaning of the three commissions given to Elijah was to appoint three persons, two kings and a prophet, each in his own way to punish the sin of the people in the worship of Baal. And yet God says this is not a universal judgment, for he has seven thousand left who have not bowed to Baal. *Kissed him* (see Ps. 2: 12; Hos. 13: 2): There seems to be an inconsistency here between the parable of God's appearances to Elijah, and this denunciation of judgment against his people; but it is only apparent, since what God does through wicked men is not to be looked on as if he did it himself. If the horrors of the French Revolution are to be looked on as in some sense a divine retribution for the wrongs of the French people, it is not in the sense that this is the way in which God would himself act, or encourage his people to act. These things are the inevitable result of sin acting upon sinful men; the wrong and oppression of one man acting on the capacity for hatred and vengeance in another, so that God punishes one sin by its recoil in another. But God's own direct action is gracious, restraining all these evil things.

LESSON IX.

THE STORY OF NABOTH.—1 Kings 21:4-19.

A GENERAL VIEW.—After the appearance to Elijah in Horeb, he came to the vicinity of Damascus probably. On the way he stopped at Abel-meholah, the residence of Elisha, and took him from the plough into his service. The next chapter gives an account of a war waged by Benhadad, king of Syria, against Ahab, in which there are certain indications of a somewhat changed and bettered condition of things between Jehovah and Ahab. Benhadad brought with him a great army, collected not only from his own land, but from many subject provinces, and laid siege to Samaria. The siege seems to have been successful; for when Benhadad sent messengers to parley for a surrender, exacting the very hardest conditions, Ahab felt compelled to submit to them. But when the Syrian king increased his demands, exacting this time not only from the king, but from his subjects, then Ahab, after consulting the elders, refused to yield; whereupon Benhadad proceeded to assault the city. At this juncture there came a prophet to Ahab, and encouraged him to make a sally

against the besiegers, promising to deliver the Syrian army into his hands. Ahab made the venture with his small force, and routed the Syrian army. The prophet, however, warned the king to be prepared for a fresh invasion the next year. Meantime, Benhadad was encouraged by his servants to believe that his defeat was owing to the battle being fought among the hills, where the gods of Israel were masters, and that victory would result from a battle fought on the plains. This challenge of Jehovah settled the result of the next year's campaign; as Benhadad was defeated disastrously, and purchased peace and his life only on the most humiliating terms. This victory was also promised by the prophet; but, because Ahab spared Benhadad on his own responsibility, a prophet foretold his violent death, and the destruction of his people. This frequent appearance of the prophets would seem to indicate that the ban had been removed from them, and the interference of the Lord in behalf of Israel points to a better state of things between them; but if there had been any check put upon Ahab's evil nature, it broke loose again in the affair of Naboth.

4 And Ahab came into his house heavy and displeased because of the word which Naboth the Jezreelite had spoken to him: for he had said, I will not give thee the inheritance of my fathers. And he laid him down upon his bed, and turned away his face, and would eat no bread.

5 ¶ But Jezebel his wife came to him, and said unto him, Why is thy spirit so sad, that thou eatest no bread?

6 And he said unto her, Because I spake unto Naboth the Jezreelite, and said unto him, Give me thy vineyard for money; or else, if it

please thee, I will give thee *another* vineyard for it: and he answered, I will not give thee my vineyard.

7 And Jezebel his wife said unto him, Dost thou now govern the kingdom of Israel? arise, and eat bread, and let thine heart be merry; I will give thee the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite.

8 So she wrote letters in Ahab's name, and sealed *them* with his seal, and sent the letters unto the elders and to the nobles that *were* in his city, dwelling with Naboth.

9 And she wrote in the letters, saying, Proclaim a fast, and set Naboth ¹ on high among the people:

¹ Heb. *in the top of the people.*

NOTES.—4. *Heavy and displeased*: Sullen and angry. For the cause of this displeasure, see verses 1-3. *Upon his bed*: More probably, his couch, on which he reclined at meals. This sullen displeasure of the king, which yet stopped short of the violence afterwards wrought by Jezebel, is a tribute to the restraint exercised, even on an Eastern king, by the essential justice of Jewish institutions. He was angry at the refusal to yield to his royal wish, but he felt himself hedged in by a law that applied equally to himself and his subjects.

5. *Why is thy spirit so sad, that thou eatest no bread?* Why is thy spirit sullen, and thou eatest.

7. *Dost thou now govern the kingdom of Israel?* Dost thou now administer the kingdom over Israel? The pronoun is made very emphatic here. It is uncertain whether it is an ironical statement—*Thou now bearest rule over Israel, forsooth*—or a question, as in our version; but the meaning is substantially the same in either case. The queen ridicules his assumption to be king, when he cannot have his way with his subjects. *I will give thee the vineyard*: The subject is emphatic, to contrast it with the king's inability to obtain the vineyard for himself.

8. *Unto the elders and to the nobles*: The elders were those who ruled over the city. The nobles apparently had rank; and the word seems to show that with the kingdom had sprung up a class having hereditary position among the people. *In his city*: viz., Jezreel.

9. *Proclaim a fast, and set Naboth on high among the people*: Literally, at the head of the people. There is some difficulty here, as the expression naturally

10 And set two men, sons of Belial, before him, to bear witness against him, saying, Thou didst blaspheme God and the king. And then carry him out, and stone him, that he may die.

11 And the men of his city, even the elders and the nobles who were the inhabitants in his city, did as Jezebel had sent unto them, and as it was written in the letters which she had sent unto them.

12 They proclaimed a fast, and set Naboth on high among the people.

13 And there came in two men, children of Belial, and sat before him: and the men of Belial witnessed against him, even against Naboth, in the presence of the people, saying, Naboth did blaspheme God and the king. Then they carried him forth out of the city, and stoned him with stones, that he died.

14 Then they sent to Jezebel, saying, Naboth is stoned, and is dead.

15 ¶ And it came to pass, when Jezebel heard that Naboth was stoned, and was dead, that Jezebel said to Ahab, Arise, take possession of the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite, which he refused to give thee for money; for Naboth is not alive, but dead.

16 And it came to pass, when Ahab heard that Naboth was dead, that Ahab rose up to go down to the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite, to take possession of it.

17 ¶ And the word of the LORD came to Elijah the Tishbite, saying,

18 Arise, go down to meet Ahab king of Israel, which is in Samaria: behold, he is in the vineyard of Naboth, whither he is gone down to possess it.

implies a position of honor; but in the connection it probably denotes only the prominent position that would be given to a man on trial. The fast was intended to express grief and horror for the supposed offence. When the people asked the reason of it, then Naboth was to be brought forth, and the accusation against him recited.

10. *Two men:* In order to comply with the provision of the law, requiring two witnesses to convict a person. See Num. 35: 30; Deut. 17: 6, in both which the requirement is in regard to capital offences; and Deut. 19: 15, where it is made general. *Sons of Belial:* This is not a proper name, but an abstract noun meaning *worthlessness*. The expression means *worthless fellows*. *Thou didst blaspheme:* Thou hast cursed. *God and the king:* To curse God was a religious offence, punishable with death under the law (see Lev. 24: 14); and to curse the king was a political offence, equally odious under a personal rule, such as an Eastern monarchy. *And stone him:* The queen gives the thing the form of a judicial proceeding before the people, but she takes no pains to disguise her wickedness before the subservient rulers and men of rank. She bids them suborn witnesses, and foredooms an innocent man. Stoning was the punishment of blasphemy, and in fact the ordinary form of capital punishment among the Jews. It was to be executed without the city.

15. *Arise, take possession of the vineyard:* Naboth was now dead, and out of the way; and it appears from 2 Kings 9: 26, that his children were also put to death: so that the obstacles to Ahab's possession of the vineyard were removed. Moreover, it is probable that the estates of a person sentenced for treason were confiscated to the crown.

17. *And the word of the Lord came to Elijah the Tishbite:* It must be meant that this is a direct communication from Jehovah, as it conveys to the prophet tidings as well as commands. If Elijah had known the circumstances of Naboth's death, it might have meant simply that the Lord impressed on his mind what he should say to Ahab about his crime; but as the word contained apparently the first intimation that Elijah had had of these transactions, it must be strictly supernatural.

18. *Go down to meet Ahab, king of Israel, which is in Samaria:* This relative clause is somewhat difficult to explain. The relative refers to Ahab, not to Israel; and the statement that he is in Samaria must refer to the territory, not the city of Samaria;

19 And thou shalt speak unto him, saying, Thus saith the LORD, In the place where dogs licked the blood of Naboth shall dogs lick thy blood, even thine.

since the very next statement is that Ahab is in the vineyard of Naboth, which was in Jezreel. But the statement that he is in the territory of Samaria is both superfluous and indefinite. However, it is to be preferred to the explanation which makes it refer to the city of Samaria.

19. *Hast thou killed, and also taken possession:* The Lord charges the murder of Naboth on the king, although it does not appear that Ahab took any active part in it; but he allowed Jezebel to proceed in her own way to get possession of the vineyard, although he knew that she had no such scruples as even a degenerate Jew would have, in regard to the rights of subjects. It does not appear that he knew the steps that she was taking; but he does not scruple, after it is all over, to take advantage of her crime. *In the place where dogs licked the blood of Naboth shall dogs lick thy blood:* This prophecy was partly fulfilled in the case of Ahab, who was slain in battle at Ramoth-gilead, and the dogs licked the blood that came from his chariot, as they were washing it; but this was done at Samaria, — not at Jezreel, as the strict fulfilment of the prophecy required. His son and successor, Jehoram, was cast into the field of Naboth (see 2 Kings 9: 25, 26), where this is said to be the fulfilment of the sentence pronounced on Ahab. The delay in the fulfilment of the prophecy, promised in verse 29, evidently refers to the part of it directed against his house, not against himself.

The lesson is interesting; because it shows the weakness and wickedness of Ahab, not only in his idolatry, which was a sin immediately against God, but in his oppression of his subjects. It shows that his crimes were the result of his weakness, rather than of active wickedness, and that Jezebel was the dominant spirit in both the idolatry and the oppression; and, finally, that God's anger was provoked fully as much by the wickedness of the king in his oppression of his subjects, as in his failure to worship the true God.

LESSON X.

ELIJAH TRANSLATED.—2 Kings 2:1-15.

A GENERAL VIEW.—The history between this and the preceding lesson covers three principal events. First, the death of Ahab. This took place in a war waged by Ahab in league with Jehoshaphat, the king of Judah, against the Syrians at Ramoth-gilead. The two kings consulted with the prophets of the Lord, who promised them success in their enterprise; but Ahab did not feel secure till he had called in Micaiah, who with true prophetic insight prophesied evil against the evil king. Micaiah foresaw and foretold disaster, instead of victory. Ahab put him in prison, and in defiance of the warning went out to battle. Then, finally, the evil that had been gathering over him broke upon him. He was defeated and slain, and the dogs licked his blood. Second, the death of Ahaziah, who succeeded his father Ahab on the throne. He had been seriously injured by a fall, and sent to inquire of Baal-zebub, at Ekron, whether he should recover. The messengers met Elijah, who had been apprised of their errand by the angel of the Lord; and he sent them back with the message that Ahaziah should die, because he had not inquired of the Lord. Then, when the king sent a captain with fifty men to take the presumptuous prophet, Elijah, with his old stern spirit, called down fire from heaven to consume them. A second fifty shared the same fate. A third party, resorting to entreaty, was spared, and Elijah went with them; but his message remained the same,—that the king must die. In default of a son, his brother Jehoram succeeded him.

1 And it came to pass, when the LORD would take up Elijah into heaven by a whirlwind, that Elijah went with Elisha from Gilgal.

2 And Elijah said unto Elisha, Tarry here, I pray thee; for the LORD hath sent me to Beth-el. And Elisha said *unto him*, As the LORD liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee. So they went down to Beth-el.

3 And the sons of the prophets that *were* at Beth-el came forth to Elisha, and said unto him, Knowest thou that the LORD will take away thy master from thy head to day? And he said, Yea, I know it; hold ye your peace.

4 And Elijah said unto him, Elisha, tarry here, I pray thee; for the LORD hath sent me to Jericho. And he said, As the LORD liveth,

NOTES.—1. *When the Lord would take up Elijah:* We learn from 2 Chron. 21: 12, that Elijah was still living in the reign of Joram, the son of Jehoshaphat, and his successor on the throne of Judah; and as he did not begin his reign till the fifth year of Jehoram, king of Israel, we have to postpone the translation of Elijah to a later date than appears here (2 Kings 8: 16). In fact, all that follows to chapter 8, as it took place within the reign of Jehoshaphat, and before the accession of Joram to the throne of Judah, must, according to this, have taken place within the life of Elijah. And yet it is a history of the prophetic activity of Elisha, not of Elijah. This did not begin, therefore, with the translation of Elijah, as would appear from our narrative. However, chronology, which is very uncertain, and this slight mention in 2 Chron. 21: 12, may be too narrow a foundation for so broad, and in itself improbable, an inference. *By a whirlwind:* In a storm. There is nothing even to indicate that it was a wind-storm. *Elijah went with Elisha:* Since the events narrated in 1 Kings 19: 16-21, Elisha had been the attendant of Elijah. *From Gilgal:* Not the Gilgal south of Jericho is meant; for that is twelve hundred feet below Bethel, whereas the verb used here indicates that they went down from Gilgal to Bethel. Probably the place meant is some fifteen miles north of Lydda, and about the same distance north-west of Bethel.

2. *Tarry here, I pray thee:* That is, probably, in Gilgal. He said it before they started. *The Lord hath sent me to Bethel:* There was a school of the prophets there, according to verse 3; and it was probably to visit them before his departure, and say some final words to them, that Elijah was going there. His reason for asking Elisha to stay behind was, probably, that he had had some intimation of what was to take place, and that he had doubts as to the fitness of having any spectators of so solemn a scene. *As the Lord liveth, and as thy soul liveth:* Either of these oaths is strong, but the two together are rarely used, and unusually emphatic. *I will not leave thee:* Elisha, too, had had intimations of what was to take place; and he was determined to follow his master, not to witness a solemn scene, but to catch the last words of a great man, and to secure that inheritance of Elijah's spirit which would fit him for his work (see verses 3, 9). *They went down to Bethel:* The place, some ten miles north of Jerusalem, where Jacob had his heavenly vision; and afterwards, in the time of the judges, a place of religious resort, and one of the abodes of the ark (see Gen. 28: 19; Judg. 20: 18, 26, 31; 21: 2; 20: 26-28; 21: 4). Jeroboam made it the southern depository of the calf-worship.

3. *The sons of the prophets:* That is, their disciples; a teacher being looked on as in the place of a father to his pupils. It did not follow that a man who had the prophetic training at one of these schools would possess the prophetic gift; but they received instruction probably in the law, and in poetical and musical expression, as a preparation both for the gift of inspiration and for the use of it. *Knowest thou that the Lord will take away thy master from thy head to-day?* From over thy head. They, too, as well as Elijah and Elisha, had intimations of the coming event. *Hold ye your peace:* This is in the original a single word meaning *Hush*. Elisha feels the solemnity of the impending event, and enjoins silence in the presence of its mystery.

4. *The Lord hath sent me to Jericho:* Since here, too, there was a school of the prophets. It lay on his way, moreover, to the other side of the Jordan.

and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee. So they came to Jericho.

5 And the sons of the prophets that were at Jericho came to Elisha, and said unto him, Knowest thou that the LORD will take away thy master from thy head to day? And he answered, Yea, I know it; hold ye your peace.

6 And Elijah said unto him, Tarry, I pray thee, here; for the LORD hath sent me to Jordan. And he said, As the LORD liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee. And they two went on.

7 And fifty men of the sons of the prophets went, and stood ¹ to view afar off: and they two stood by Jordan.

8 And Elijah took his mantle, and wrapped it together, and smote the waters, and they were divided hither and thither, so that they two went over on dry ground.

9 ¶ And it came to pass, when they were gone over, that Elijah said unto Elisha, Ask what I shall do for thee, before I be taken away from thee. And Elisha said, I pray thee, let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me.

10 And he said, ² Thou hast asked a hard thing: nevertheless, if thou see me when I am taken from thee, it shall be so unto thee; but if not, it shall not be so.

11 And it came to pass, as they still went on, and talked, that, behold, there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven.

12 ¶ And Elisha saw it; and he cried, My father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof. And he saw him no more: and he took hold of his own clothes, and rent them in two pieces.

¹ Heb. in sight, or, over against. ² Heb. Thou hast done hard in asking.

7. *Stood to view afar off*: Over against them at a distance.

8. *Took his mantle*: The cape which, with the strip of skin about the loins, formed the rough and scanty clothing of the prophet. *They were divided hither and thither*: This is the third instance of this miracle; the Red Sea having been divided by Moses, and the Jordan at the entrance into the promised land under Joshua (see Ex. 14: 21; Josh. 3: 16).

9. *Let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me*: Not twice what Elijah had, which would be a presumptuous request; but a double portion, twice what any one else had, which was the inheritance of the elder son (see Deut. 21: 17). This would mark Elisha as the successor of Elijah.

10. *Thou hast asked a hard thing*: He knew that Elisha was to be his successor, according to 1 Kings 19: 16; but just what portion of his spirit his successor was to have seemed beyond his control. However, he felt that the sign named by him in the latter part of the verse would be a sufficient test, whether the Lord granted the request.

11. *Behold, . . . a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, . . . and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven*: The event here recorded is mysterious; and we have no means of illustrating it, or of explaining its details, by any thing within our own knowledge. The ascension of Jesus is the only parallel to it; and the contrast between the chariot of fire and the storm, and the cloud which received Jesus out of the sight of his disciples, is characteristic of the contrasted lives.

12. *The chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof*: The strength or defence of the land. The strength of the nation was Jehovah; and in this time of religious degeneracy, so fearless a prophet as Elijah, who served to check the rising tide of idolatry, was peculiarly needed, and his loss would be unusually great. The same expression of lament was used over Elisha as his end drew near (see 13: 14). *His own clothes*: The word *own* is inserted by the translators, to distinguish them from Elijah's clothes, and prevent ambiguity. But the word has nothing corresponding to it in the original; and the contrast expressed by it with the mantle of Elijah, suggesting the idea that he cast off his

13 He took up also the mantle of Elijah that fell from him, and went back, and stood by the ¹bank of Jordan;

14 And he took the mantle of Elijah that fell from him, and smote the waters, and said, Where is the LORD God of Elijah? and when he also had smitten the waters, they

parted hither and thither: and Elisha went over.

15 And when the sons of the prophets which *were* to view at Jericho saw him, they said, The spirit of Elijah doth rest on Elisha. And they came to meet him, and bowed themselves to the ground before him.

¹ Heb. *lip*.

own clothes, and put on the cloak of Elijah, is unwarranted. The rending of his garments was the ordinary Eastern sign of great grief.

13. *He took up also the mantle of Elijah:* And he took up the mantle. When Elijah took him into his service, he cast his cloak to him, probably as a sign of adoption; and now his cloak falls from Elijah finally, and Elisha takes it up as a sign of his investiture with the prophetic office.

14. *And he took the mantle of Elijah, and smote the waters:* This rude cloak was a sign of the stern prophet's severe and extraordinary sanctity; and, in smiting the waters with that, he was establishing a connection with the supernatural power wielded by him. *Where is the Lord God of Elijah? and when he also had smitten:* Where is Jehovah, the God of Elijah, even he? and when he had smitten. The words *even he* emphasize the fact that it is Elijah's God, he and none other, on whom Elisha calls. He asks the question, because he feels that he is only putting the matter to a test, whether the God of Elijah is to be with him; and, to make the test as severe and striking as possible, he attempts the repetition of Elijah's last miracle, just performed in the sight of the sons of the prophets, who were also to witness his trial.

15. *Which were to view at Jericho:* Who were in Jericho, on the opposite side. They seem to have been spectators of the parting of the waters by both prophets; and hence, they recognize Elisha's inheritance of the prophetic spirit, and do him homage.

LESSON XI.

THE SHUNAMMITE'S SON.—2 Kings 4:18-37.

A GENERAL VIEW.—The record of Elisha's work is in one respect very unlike that of Elijah; for the account of Elijah gives special prominence to his work as a prophet, an inspired preacher of righteousness, and a rebuker of sin. His miracles are strictly subordinate to this religious work, the means by which he fulfils his prophetic office. But the narrative of Elisha contains an account simply of his miracles, without any preaching of righteousness or conflict with sin; but, fortunately, the miracles themselves tell a story, being not merely signs of power, but moral acts permeated with a distinctive spirit. The first of them, after the smiting of the waters of the Jordan, was the healing of the waters at Jericho. Then in quick succession come the subjection of Moab, the multiplication of the widow's oil, the gift and restoration of the Shunammite woman's son, the change of the poisonous broth to healthy food, the multiplication of food in a time of famine, the healing of the leprous Naaman the Syrian, and the relief of Samaria when it was besieged by the Syrians. In all this there is as strict an adherence to beneficent action as in the miracles of Jesus. The only exception to this is in the destruction of the children at Bethel,—an incident which would excite little remark in the life of an Elijah, but which seems out of place in the career of the gentle Elisha. In accordance with this milder spirit, we find that the life of the younger prophet was not so stormy, and more prosperous. A part of this is no

doubt due to the putting away of the Baal-worship, leaving only the milder sin of image-worship, established by Jeroboam, with which to contend; and part may be owing to a more compromising spirit in Elisha. But, with all these abatements, the quieter life is a fit accompaniment of the more beneficent spirit.

18 And when the child was grown, it fell on a day, that he went out to his father to the reapers.

19 And he said unto his father, My head, my head. And he said to a lad, Carry him to his mother.

20 And when he had taken him, and brought him to his mother, he sat on her knees till noon, and then died.

21 And she went up, and laid him on the bed of the man of God, and shut *the door* upon him, and went out.

22 And she called unto her husband, and said, Send me, I pray thee, one of the young men, and one of the asses, that I may run to the man of God, and come again.

23 And he said, Wherefore wilt thou go to him to-day? *it is* neither new moon, nor sabbath. And she said, *It shall be*¹ well.

24 Then she saddled an ass, and said to her servant, Drive, and go forward; ² slack not *thy* riding for me, except I bid thee.

¹ Heb. *peace*. ² Heb. *restrain not for me to ride*.

NOTES.—18. *It fell on a day*: Came to pass. *To the reapers*: So that it was in the hot season, and the child probably had a sunstroke.

19. *Carry him to his mother*: The father does not seem to have gone with the child himself, and can scarcely have known, or even suspected, the seriousness of the attack.

21. *Laid him on the bed of the man of God*: Here begins in our lesson the reference to Elisha's connection with this family, and specially with this son. The whole story is very beautiful. He was in the habit of passing by the house; and, with the fine freedom of Eastern hospitality, he turned in, and ate bread with them. The woman perceived that he was a man of God, and built out a chamber for him, and furnished it; so that the ordinary attentions of hospitality given to any stranger became the reverent care bestowed on the servant of God. The child of whom our lesson tells was the reward given to the childless woman for this hospitality. The laying of the body on the prophet's bed was the first, slight but significant, token that the woman turned to him in her extremity.

22. *One of the asses*: The she-asses. The ass was a valuable animal in the East, both for burden bearing and riding. The latter use was by no means degrading, though the ass is not so fiery an animal as the horse, and not used in war; but it was bred with great care, and highly valued as a domestic animal.

23. *It is neither new moon, nor sabbath*: In the Levitical law, provisions are made for special sacrifices on the first day of the lunar month; and these sacrifices were announced by the trumpets, as on the solemn festivals. Amos speaks of a sabbatic observance of the day (8: 5). For what purpose the prophet was resorted to, on either this or the sabbath, does not appear; possibly for sacrifice, possibly for religious instruction. For though there is no command in the law to utilize the Jewish sacred days for religious teaching, there was a tendency that way. *It shall be well*: The single word used here means *welfare, health*, or as a secondary meaning, *peace*. It would be a simple salutation at meeting; but at parting the Hebrews said not, *Peace*, but, *Go in peace*. It is probably her brief way of saying that all is well, there is no harm in her going. The woman's reticence is one of the striking things about the story. It is the suppression of words and feeling in an intense nature under the influence of a great grief, and intent on one thing. Her dead child is in the house, and the man of God is at Carmel; and she will not pass words with any one till the two are brought together.

24. *Drive, and go forward*: The servant was not himself riding, but running at the head of the horse. *Slack not thy riding for me*: This is a wrong translation, as he was not riding. It should read *Do not check my riding*.

25 So she went and came unto the man of God to mount Carmel. And it came to pass, when the man of God saw her afar off, that he said to Gehazi his servant, Behold, *yonder is* that Shunammite:

26 Run now, I pray thee, to meet her, and say unto her, *Is it well with thee?* *is it well with thy husband?* *is it well with the child?* And she answered, *It is well.*

27 And when she came to the man of God to the hill, she caught ¹ him by the feet: but Gehazi came near to thrust her away. And the man of God said, Let her alone; for her soul *is* ² vexed within her: and the Lord hath hid *it* from me, and hath not told me.

28 Then she said, Did I desire a

son of my lord? did I not say, Do not deceive me?

29 Then he said to Gehazi, Gird up thy loins, and take my staff in thine hand, and go thy way: if thou meet any man, salute him not; and if any salute thee, answer him not again: and lay my staff upon the face of the child.

30 And the mother of the child said, *As the Lord liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee.* And he arose, and followed her.

31 And Gehazi passed on before them, and laid the staff upon the face of the child; but *there was* neither voice nor ³ hearing. Wherefore he went again to meet him, and told him, saying, The child is not awaked.

¹ Heb. *by his feet*, Matt. 28: 9. ² Heb. *bitter*, 1 Sam. 1: 10. ³ Heb. *attention*.

25. *To Mount Carmel:* On the situation and character of this range, see on 1 Kings 18: 19, Lesson VI., General View. The prophet was for the time sojourning there. Shunem was some ten miles distant from the nearest point in the range. *Gehazi:* The first appearance of this servant is in this account of the Shunamite woman, verse 12. *Behold . . . that Shunammite:* Shunamite woman; the word is feminine.

26. *Is it well with thee?* The word used here is the same as the last word in verse 23; only it is used here with an interrogative, making it an inquiry after the health or welfare of the person. The woman's answer, of course, gets its meaning from this, as she uses the same word in reply; but it is an ambiguous answer, as the word may be also a mere salutation, wishing the person addressed well. She is careless how it is taken, as she desires only to come to speech with the prophet.

27. *She caught him by the feet:* To fall on the ground, and cling to the feet, signified great importunacy. *To thrust her away:* Servants have sometimes a larger sense of their master's importance than the master himself. The woman's action was proper and natural, considering the circumstances; but Gehazi did not know the circumstances. *Her soul is vexed:* Is bitter. This is the first reason why her importunacy is allowed, because the prophet sees that she is under the pressure of some great grief. *The Lord hath hid it from me:* This is the second reason,—that he wishes to know the cause of her grief, which Jehovah has not told him.

28. *Did I not say, Do not deceive me?* That is, when a son had been promised her (verse 16). To have a son only to lose him so young, she considers a virtual deceiving of her hopes. She is not concerned even now to tell her grief, the boy's death or the circumstances of it, as a voluble person would; but comes straight to her appeal, leaving that to tell the evident story of its occasion. The appeal itself is striking, intended to make Elisha feel the cruelty of raising so great hopes only to disappoint them.

29. *Gird up thy loins:* For speed. *Salute him not:* As much as to say, Do not stop for any thing, even to salute any one on the road. *Lay my staff upon the face of the child:* Apparently, he did not mean to go himself, and thought that the cure might be effected in this way.

30. *I will not leave thee:* The mother is not satisfied with the prophet's servant and staff; she does not believe that any thing less than the prophet himself can meet the emergency.

31. *There was neither voice nor hearing:* This is not said of the child, but of

32 And when Elisha was come into the house, behold, the child was dead, *and* laid upon his bed.

33 He went in therefore, and shut the door upon them twain, and prayed unto the Lord.

34 And he went up, and lay upon the child, and put his mouth upon his mouth, and his eyes upon his eyes, and his hands upon his hands: and he stretched himself upon the child; and the flesh of the child waxed warm.

35 Then he returned, and walked in the house ¹to and fro; and went up, and stretched himself upon him: and the child sneezed seven times, and the child opened his eyes.

36 And he called Gehazi, and said, Call this Shunammite. So he called her. And when she was come in unto him, he said, Take up thy son.

37 Then she went in, and fell at his feet, and bowed herself to the ground, and took up her son, and went out.

¹ Heb. *once hither, and once thither.*

God. He gave no sign of hearing or reply. (See 1 Kings 18:26, 29.) *The child is not awaked:* Just as sleep was used of death, so waking is here put for coming to life.

32. *Laid upon his bed:* Elisha's. (See verse 21.)

33. *Shut the door:* He felt that the solemn scene was not to be witnessed, just as Jesus kept his miracles largely from the crowd. *Prayed unto the Lord:* He sees that this is no ordinary miracle, in which the intervention of Jehovah is to be taken for granted, even by his prophet, but something in which he must set to work earnestly to secure the divine favor.

34. *And lay upon the child:* He follows now the example of Elijah in performing the same miracle. (See 1 Kings 17:21.)

35. *Walked in the house to and fro:* Once hither, and once thither.

LESSON XII.

NAAMAN THE SYRIAN.—2 Kings 5:1-16.

A GENERAL VIEW.—These stories of Elisha's life are given, for the most part, without any historical setting, and apparently with little attempt at chronological arrangement. In this account, for instance, the king of Israel and the king of Syria are mentioned, but their names are not given: but probably the king of Israel was Jehoram, the son of Ahab; and Benhadad II., the contemporary of Ahab, was king of Syria. About Naaman, there is nothing further told in Scripture; and, in the next appearance of the commander of the Syrian armies, it is Hazael who occupies the position. Naaman does figure in Josephus, however, as the man who drew the bow “at a venture,” and gave Ahab his death-wound. The story has an interest of its own; because it is one of the few instances in the Old Testament in which miraculous power is used in behalf of any Gentile, instead of against him. In this respect it anticipates the catholic spirit of the gospel, which displaced the exclusiveness of Judaism. It is one of the instances cited by our Lord in the synagogue at Nazareth, to show that a prophet may have more honor elsewhere than in his own country. In remarkable accordance with this, and tending to show that the source of this narrative was one in which Jehovah's universal rule and providence were recognized, is the statement in verse 1, that Naaman was the man through whom Jehovah had given deliverance to Syria.

1 Now Naaman, captain of the host of the king of Syria, was a great man ¹with his master, and ²honourable, because by him the LORD had given ³deliverance unto Syria: he was also a mighty man in valour, *but he was a leper.*

2 And the Syrians had gone out by companies, and had brought away captive out of the land of Israel a little maid; and she ⁴waited on Naaman's wife.

3 And she said unto her mistress, Would God my lord *were* ¹with the prophet that *is* in Samaria! for he would ⁵recover him of his leprosy.

4 And *one* went in, and told his lord, saying, Thus and thus said the maid that *is* of the land of Israel.

5 And the king of Syria said, Go

to, go, and I will send a letter unto the king of Israel. And he departed, and took ⁶with him ten talents of silver, and six thousand pieces of gold, and ten changes of raiment.

6 And he brought the letter to the king of Israel, saying, Now when this letter is come unto thee, behold, I have *therewith* sent Naaman my servant to thee, that thou mayest recover him of his leprosy.

7 And it came to pass, when the king of Israel had read the letter, that he rent his clothes, and said, *Am I God, to kill and to make alive, that this man doth send unto me to recover a man of his leprosy?* wherefore consider, I pray you, and see how he seeketh a quarrel against me.

¹ Heb. *before*. ² Or, *gracious*. Heb. *lifted up*; or, *accepted in countenance*. ³ Or, *victory*. ⁴ Heb. *was before*. ⁵ Heb. *Gather in*. ⁶ Heb. *in his hand*.

NOTES.—1. *And honourable*: Honored. *The Lord had given deliverance unto Syria*: This statement is the more noticeable, because the name Jehovah is employed here,—a title usually reserved to denote God's special relation to his people. What this deliverance was, we are not told. It may have been some such exploit as the killing of Ahab, mentioned above; or it may have been his conspicuous part in the deliverance of Syria from the Assyrian invasions, of which the Assyrian monuments tell us at this period. *A leper*: In Israel this would have debarred him from society, to say nothing of high position. The leprosy was local, not infecting the whole body, and of the white kind (see verses 11 and 27).

2. *Had gone out by companies*: That is, probably, in one of the partisan forays constantly occurring between neighboring countries; not in a general invasion.

3. *The prophet who is in Samaria*: Probably here the city is meant, as Elisha seems to have been resident at the capital at this time (see verse 8). One of the contrasts between Elijah and Elisha is this dwelling of the latter in the abodes of men.

4. *And one went in, and told his lord*: He went in; viz., Naaman to the king.

5. *Go to, go*: Better, Depart, go; though the first is used sometimes as a particle of incitement merely. *A letter unto the king of Israel*: With the idea that prophets, like all the rest of his subjects, were in the service of the king, and that their miraculous power was at his disposal. However, there was this valid reason for the procedure, that the intrusion of a man occupying Naaman's position into a hostile country would be one of which some account would have to be given to the king. *Ten talents of silver, and six thousand pieces of gold*: Shekels of gold. The talent and the shekel were both at this time weights, not coins. The shekel was about half an ounce, and the talent was three thousand shekels. This would make the talent of silver to be worth about \$1,875, and the shekel of gold about \$9.70. The whole amount of silver would be thus \$18,750, and of gold, \$58,200.

6. *The letter, . . . saying*: That is, the part of the letter pertaining directly to this matter. *That thou mayest recover him of his leprosy*: The meaning is not that the king should perform the cure himself, but that he should procure its performance.

7. *He rent his clothes*: In token of his grief. He thought that he saw in this preposterous request, simply a pretext to make further injurious demands on him on the

8 ¶ And it was so, when Elisha the man of God had heard that the king of Israel had rent his clothes, that he sent to the king, saying, Wherefore hast thou rent thy clothes? let him come now to me, and he shall know that there is a prophet in Israel.

9 So Naaman came with his horses and with his chariot, and stood at the door of the house of Elisha.

10 And Elisha sent a messenger unto him, saying, Go and wash in Jordan seven times, and thy flesh shall come again to thee, and thou shalt be clean.

11 But Naaman was wroth, and

went away, and said, Behold, ¹ I thought, He will surely come out to me, and stand, and call on the name of the LORD his God, and ² strike his hand over the place, and recover the leper.

12 Are not ³ Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? may I not wash in them, and be clean? So he turned and went away in a rage.

13 And his servants came near, and spake unto him, and said, My father, if the prophet had bid thee do *some* great thing, wouldest thou not have done *it*? how much rather then, when he saith to thee, Wash, and be clean?

¹ Heb. *I said*; or, *I said with myself, He will surely come out, etc.* ² Heb. *move up and down.* ³ Or, *Amana.*

part of a powerful neighbor. *Am I God, to kill and to make alive?* (See Deut. 32:39.) The king saw, or pretended to see, in this a request that he should perform the miracle himself, either forgetting or ignoring the existence of Elisha, and the proofs that he had had of the prophet's power. In the only record that we have, previous to this, of any meeting of the king and prophet, neither seems to have had any friendly feeling towards the other (see chapter 3: 11-16.).

8. *He shall know that there is a prophet in Israel:* This supposition was what had brought Naaman out of Syria; but the king was sending him away, as if there were none.

9. *With his horses and with his chariot:* His mounted retinue, and the chariot in which he himself rode.

10. *Elisha sent a messenger unto him:* Emulating the state which Naaman put on. In accordance with Eastern etiquette, the great Naaman had waited in state at the door of the humble prophet, and expected him to come out to him; but Elisha, conscious of the greater dignity conferred on him by the service of Jehovah, sent a messenger to Naaman, instead of coming out himself. *Go and wash in Jordan seven times:* Instead of performing the cure himself, he lays it on the haughty Syrian, making him travel thirty miles to the Jordan for it. *Seven times:* A sacred number. *Thy flesh shall come again to thee:* Leprosy was a disease of the skin, causing an unnatural whiteness of the flesh, and of the hair covering it, and resulting finally in distortion of the joints.

11. *Behold, I thought:* I said to myself. *And strike his hand over the place:* Move his hand up and down. Naaman thought that the cure would be performed in a way to show proper deference and respect to himself. *The leper:* The word means the smitten or scourged, and its common use to denote a leper shows the way in which the disease was regarded.

12. *Abana and Pharpar:* There is little doubt of the identity of the Abana with the Barrada, the principal river of the Damascus region; and the Pharpar we may suppose to be the Awaj, the other river of the neighborhood. *Better than all the waters of Israel:* These are clear streams, while the Jordan is a muddy torrent. Naaman is reasoning with a soldier's impetuosity, as if the virtue lay in the water, in which case he has no doubt of the superiority of his own clear streams.

13. *My father:* A title of respect and affection used by these men, who were evidently personal attendants or adherents of Naaman. *Some great thing:* Something

14 Then went he down, and dipped himself seven times in Jordan, according to the saying of the man of God: and his flesh came again like unto the flesh of a little child, and he was clean.

15 ¶ And he returned to the man of God, he and all his company, and came, and stood before him: and

he said, Behold, now I know that *there is* no God in all the earth, but in Israel: now therefore, I pray thee, take a blessing of thy servant.

16 But he said, *As the LORD liveth*, before whom I stand, I will receive none. And he urged him to take *it*; but he refused.

comporting with his dignity, while, at the same time, involving more toil and difficulty than the dipping in Jordan.

14. *He was clean*: This was not only a disease involving ceremonial uncleanness, but an actually loathsome disease in itself.

15. *He returned to the man of God*: Involving a journey of over thirty miles, and this time altogether out of his way. If Naaman had the quick temper and pride of the soldier, he had also his honor. Having received a benefit, he would acknowledge it at any cost. *No God in all the earth, but in Israel*: There are other cases in which Jehovah is acknowledged by Gentiles (see Dan. 2: 47; 3: 29): but this is a recognition of Jehovah as the one God, taking the Jewish monotheistic idea, instead of the Gentile polytheism; and he proposes, therefore, to relinquish the worship of his own gods (see verses 17, 18). *Take a blessing*: A gift; the word being used in the same way as in speaking of God's benefits bestowed on men (see Gen. 49: 25; 33: 11).

16. *I will receive none*: These gifts, freely received, are to be freely bestowed. If there were cases in which the prophet received something for his wisdom or power, Elisha rose above them into the true position, in refusing to have it thought that "the gift of God might be purchased with money" (1 Sam. 9: 7, 8; 1 Kings 14: 3).

FOURTH QUARTER.



LESSON I.

ELISHA AT DOTHAN.—2 Kings 6:8-23.

A GENERAL VIEW.

DOTHAN is the place at which Joseph was delivered up by his brethren to the caravan of Midianites on their way to Egypt; and it is this circumstance, showing that it was on the road from Gilead to Egypt, together with the occurrence of the name to designate ruins in the neighborhood, that has led to the identification of the place as about twelve miles north of Shechem, near the southern extremity of Carmel. It is noticeable that Elisha appears in this narrative as giving aid and information to the king of Israel, although it does not appear that Jehovah was inclined to treat Jehoram as his friend; and yet in the siege of Samaria, that is said to follow these events (see verse 24), there appears the same disposition to persecute the prophet that we should expect from Jehoram. Probably, therefore, the change of kings, and the accession of Jehu to the throne, did not take place till after this; and Jehoram was thus the king of Israel, and Benhadad the king of Syria, at this time.

8 ¶ Then the king of Syria warred against Israel, and took counsel with his servants, saying, In such and such a place ¹ shall be my camp.

9 And the man of God sent unto the king of Israel, saying, Beware that thou pass not such a place; for thither the Syrians are come down.

¹ Or, encamping.

NOTES.—8. *Then the king of Syria warred*: Probably what is told here, in verses 8-10, is not the narrative of a single event, but of what was in the habit of occurring whenever the king of Syria went to war against Israel. At such times he would advise with his servants about the place of encampment; and, as often as he did this, it would become known to the prophet, and so to the king, and he would be put on his guard.

9. *Beware that thou pass not such a place*: The action of the king does not seem the natural result of such a warning; for we are told that he sent to the place against which he was warned, and was on his guard there. The language will bear the meaning, *Beware of passing by*, in the sense of *neglecting, this place*; that is, have a force there prepared to meet an incursion. However, Josephus does not translate it so; for he tells us that, in consequence of this warning, the king was obliged to give up his hunting. But it appears here that the thing done by the king was not so much to provide for his personal safety, as to guard against an attack; and this is in itself more probable, and is a possible construction of the language. *Are come down*: Are coming down.

10 And the king of Israel sent to the place which the man of God told him and warned him of, and saved himself there, not once nor twice.

11 Therefore the heart of the king of Syria was sore troubled for this thing; and he called his servants, and said unto them, Will ye not shew me which of us *is* for the king of Israel?

12 And one of his servants said, ¹None, my lord, O king: but Elisha, the prophet that *is* in Israel, telleth the king of Israel the words that thou speakest in thy bedchamber.

13 ¶ And he said, Go and spy where he *is*, that I may send and fetch him. And it was told him, saying, Behold, *he is* in Dothan.

14 Therefore sent he thither horses, and chariots, and ²a great host: and they came by night, and compassed the city about.

15 And when the ³servant of the man of God was risen early, and gone forth, behold, an host compassed the city both with horses and chariots. And his servant said unto him, Alas, my master! how shall we do?

16 And he answered, Fear not: for they that *be* with us *are* more than they that *be* with them.

17 And Elisha prayed, and said, LORD, I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see. And the LORD opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw: and, behold, the mountain *was* full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha.

18 And when they came down to him, Elisha prayed unto the LORD, and said, Smite this people, I pray thee, with blindness. And he smote them with blindness according to the word of Elisha.

¹ Heb. *No.* ² Heb. *Heavy.* ³ Or, *minister.*

10. *And saved himself:* And was on his guard. The verb is the same as that translated "beware," in verse 9.

11. *The heart of the king of Syria was sore troubled:* Not perplexed, but distressed, vexed. *Which of us is for the king of Israel?* He thought that some traitor in his camp had betrayed his secret.

12. *None, my lord, O king, but Elisha . . . telleth:* No, my lord the king; for Elisha telleth. It denies what is assumed in the king's inquiry, that there is some one favorable to Israel in his camp; for Elisha tells his secrets. *The words that thou speakest in thy bedchamber:* That is, thy most secret utterances. The extreme seclusion of an Eastern harem adds to the force of the expression. (See Eccl. 10: 20.)

13. *Go and spy:* Go and see, simply. *He is in Dothan:* See Gen. 37: 10; also the account of Dothan in the General View.

14. *Horses, and chariots, and a great host:* That is, probably, cavalry, infantry, and chariots; or all three arms of the service.

15. *The servant of the man of God:* The personal attendant who had taken the place of Gehazi. His leprosy would debar Gehazi from retaining his place.

16. *They that be with us are more than they that be with them:* This statement derives all its force and beauty from the supposition that Elisha was walking by faith, not by sight; that he knew only that God was on his side, and that the heavenly host was not seen by him at this time, any more than by his servant. No prophet walked so constantly in the midst of wonders, that there was not always an element of uncertainty about the way in which God would show himself to be on his side; the only certainty being that God on his side meant safety. (See 2 Chron. 32: 7, 8; Ps. 55: 18; Rom. 8: 31.)

17. *Horses and chariots of fire:* This vision itself was simply a revelation to the man what it meant to be on God's side. It does not follow that these were the instruments actually employed in the miracle that followed. They showed the vision that was in the mind of the prophet to his less spiritual follower, that he might share his confidence. *The mountain:* The hill on which Dothan was situated, and which still bears the name.

18. *When they came down to him:* The Syrians, who were encamped probably on some hill over against the city. *Smite this people, . . . with blindness:*

19 ¶ And Elisha said unto them, This *is* not the way, neither *is* this the city: ¹ follow me, and I will bring you to the man whom ye seek. But he led them to Samaria.

20 And it came to pass, when they were come into Samaria, that Elisha said, LORD, open the eyes of these *men*, that they may see. And the LORD opened their eyes, and they saw; and, behold, *they were* in the midst of Samaria.

21 And the king of Israel said unto Elisha, when he saw them, My

father, shall I smite *them*? shall I smite *them*?

22 And he answered, Thou shalt not smite *them*: wouldst thou smite those whom thou hast taken captive with thy sword and with thy bow? set bread and water before them, that they may eat and drink, and go to their master.

23 And he prepared great provision for them: and when they had eaten and drunk, he sent them away, and they went to their master. So the bands of Syria came no more into the land of Israel.

¹ Heb. *come ye after me.*

Probably this has a meaning analogous to the prayer in regard to his servant, that he might see. In neither case, probably, was any thing actually done to the eyes; but in this case some illusion was effected, so that they did not see truly.

19. *This is not the way, neither is this the city*: Not the city of Dothan, which they were seeking. Elisha means that they had lost the way, and were encamped before the wrong city. The miracle was intended to make them believe this; so that, though they saw the place still, they should not recognize it. Actual blindness would have put them on their guard, making them see that they were in a trap. *He led them to Samaria*: The city of Samaria, a distance of some ten miles.

20. *Open the eyes of these men*: That is, make them see the truth of things.

21. *Shall I smite them? shall I smite them?* This is, as it appears in our version, a repetition of the question for the sake of emphasis. *My father*: Here there appears the recognition of the prophet of which mention has been made in the General View. This would not be a consequence of the present occurrence simply, but of the helpful warnings given the king by the prophet (see verses 9, 10). But it is only temporary and superficial, as appears from the way in which the king turned against the prophet in the horrors of the siege of Samaria (see verses 31, 32).

22. *Wouldst thou smite those whom thou hast taken captive with thy sword and with thy bow?* This may be a question, but it is not understood so commonly. It is more probably a command or permission, reading, Thou shalt smite, etc. The idea is to contrast those whom he takes with his sword and bow, and whom he can smite if he chooses, and these whom God has placed in his hands. There is an indication here of a different spirit from that manifested in some parts of the law, and of the Old Testament generally. The permission to slay ordinary captives is in consonance with the law, and with the general regard in which Gentiles were held as the enemies of God and of his people; but the leniency of the prophet toward these men, whom he considers as in some sense his captives, is born of a different spirit. Compare Deut. 20: 13; and Prov. 25: 21, 22; and contrast this action of Elisha with that of Elijah in the same circumstance (see 1: 9-12).

23. *So the bands of Syria came no more into the land of Israel*: This put a stop to the predatory excursions, the partisan warfare, of which this raid was a specimen. The history proceeds immediately with an account of an invasion in force.

LESSON II.

THE FAMINE IN SAMARIA.—2 Kings 7:1-17.

A GENERAL VIEW.—This account is a good illustration of the way in which the historical interest is subordinated to the religious purpose of these Books of Kings. We are again, as in the story of Naaman, and of the attempt of the Syrians to capture Elijah, left in doubt as to the identity of the king of Israel; and the incident, which must have been a turning-point in the wars between Israel and Syria, and a matter of prime historical interest, is made simply a setting for the predictive, and probably also the intercessory, power of the prophet, showing how, through him, deliverance out of a great national danger was revealed, if not brought about. And this occurs in a book intended evidently to be historical; and so it shows how the religious element predominated, if not in the life of the nation, at least in the view of that life held by the writers of its annals. A remarkable and characteristic thing about this story is the answer which Elisha gives to the king's defiance of Jehovah, and to his threat against the life of the prophet. The king is enraged against Jehovah, because he thinks that this calamity comes from the Lord; and so he threatens the life of his prophet. Elisha's mild and gracious answer is, Wait until to-morrow, and see if Jehovah is worthy of such evil thoughts. At some other time, and through some other prophet, the answer might have been a blight upon such blasphemous lips; but now it deprecates such evil thoughts of God, and asks the enraged king to wait for the next turn of the wheel, and see what he thinks of God then. The lesson is, that we must not take one revelation, nor yet another, to show us God: the only one thing that is so perfect as to show us the entire mind and heart of God is the life of Jesus; but in our study of the Old Testament we must take all together, in order to understand the infinite variety of action in the immutable God.

1 Then Elisha said, Hear ye the word of the LORD; Thus saith the LORD, To morrow about this time shall a measure of fine flour be sold for a shekel, and two measures of barley for a shekel, in the gate of Samaria.

2 Then ¹a lord on whose hand the king leaned answered the man of

God, and said, Behold, if the LORD would make windows in heaven, might this thing be? And he said, Behold, thou shalt see it with thine eyes, but shalt not eat thereof.

3 ¶ And there were four leprous men at the entering in of the gate: and they said one to another, Why sit we here until we die?

¹ Heb. *a lord which belonged to the king leaning upon his hand*, chap. 5:18.

NOTES.—1. *A measure of fine flour . . . two measures of barley*: This measure was a *seah*, equal to about one and a half pecks. *A shekel*: About half an ounce of silver, or a shilling. This is in contrast with the state of things during the siege, when an ass's head sold for eighty shekels, and a *cab* (equal to two quarts) of dove's dung sold for five shekels.

2. *A lord, on whose hand the king leaned*: Literally, The chariot-warrior, who belonged to the king, leaning on his hand. These men formed the body-guard of the king, a guard of honor. As it is strange that he should be leaning on the king's hand, and as the change of one letter gives the more probable meaning conveyed in our English version, it is better to retain the latter. *If the Lord would make windows in heaven*: The expression *opening or shutting the windows of heaven*, generally refers to the sending or withholding of rain; and here the making of windows in the heavens means the opening of like channels for the descent of food into the beleaguered city. (See Gen. 7:11; 8:2; Isa. 24:18; Mal. 3:10.)

3. *Four leprous men at the entering in of the gate*: In accordance with the Levitical law, which banished the leper from the abodes of men (see Lev. 13:46).

4 If we say, We will enter into the city, then the famine *is* in the city, and we shall die there: and if we sit still here, we die also. Now therefore come, and let us fall unto the host of the Syrians: if they save us alive, we shall live; and if they kill us, we shall but die.

5 And they rose up in the twilight, to go unto the camp of the Syrians: and when they were come to the uttermost part of the camp of Syria, behold, *there was* no man there.

6 For the LORD had made the host of the Syrians to hear a noise of chariots, and a noise of horses, *even* the noise of a great host: and they said one to another, Lo, the king of Israel hath hired against us the kings of the Hittites, and the king of the Egyptians, to come upon us.

7 Wherefore they arose and fled in the twilight, and left their tents, and their horses, and their asses,

even the camp as it *was*, and fled for their life.

8 And when these lepers came to the uttermost part of the camp, they went into one tent, and did eat and drink, and carried thence silver, and gold, and raiment, and went and hid *it*; and came again, and entered into another tent, and carried thence *also*, and went and hid *it*.

9 Then they said one to another, We do not well: this day *is* a day of good tidings, and we hold our peace: if we tarry till the morning light¹ some mischief will come upon us: now therefore come, that we may go and tell the king's household.

10 So they came and called unto the porter of the city: and they told them, saying, We came to the camp of the Syrians, and, behold, *there was* no man there, neither voice of man, but horses tied, and asses tied, and the tents as they *were*.

¹ Heb. *we shall find punishment.*

4. *Let us fall unto the host of the Syrians:* Let us desert to the camp (see Jer. 37:13; 2 Chron. 15:9).

5. *The uttermost part of the camp:* The outermost part, probably; i.e., the part nearest the city. Their exploration of the camp did not begin till afterwards apparently.

6. *The host of the Syrians:* The camp of the Syrians. *The kings of the Hittites, and the kings of the Egyptians:* It appears from both the Assyrian and Egyptian monuments, that the Hittites, who were among the Canaanite inhabitants of the land of Palestine before its occupation by the Hebrews, retired northward before that invasion, and occupied two districts,—one in the northern and one in the southern part of Syria,—becoming a somewhat powerful people. It would be this southern confederacy of the Hittites, who, from their proximity to Israel, would be likely to be joined with the Egyptians in such an alliance.

7. *In the twilight:* Evening, or even night, is a possible meaning of the word; and it would seem as if a greater darkness than twilight would be necessary in both the cases in which the word is used here. *Their horses, and their asses:* Precipitate flight would account for their leaving every thing else but these. These they left to make their escape as silent as possible.

8. *Carried thence silver, and gold, and raiment:* When these Eastern people went to war, they did not leave the luxuries of life at home. Their common soldiers never had them, either at home or in camp; but their nobles imported into the camp the pomp and luxury of the court: so that the plunder of a camp was like that of a city.

9. *This day is a day of good tidings, and we hold our peace:* They have the good tidings, and are silent about it. *Some mischief will come upon us:* Punishment will find or befall us. Not some indefinite evil; but, definitely, their sin and its punishment will find them.

10. *Called unto the porter of the city: and they told them:* Evidently there was more than one gate-keeper, or guard; and so the language shifts from singular to plural unconsciously, according as one or all are addressed. They called at first the one who was on guard at the time; and then, the whole guard being awaked, they told the story to them.

11 And he called the porters; and they told *it* to the king's house within.

12 ¶ And the king arose in the night, and said unto his servants, I will now shew you what the Syrians have done to us. They know that we be hungry; therefore are they gone out of the camp to hide themselves in the field, saying, When they come out of the city, we shall catch them alive, and get into the city.

13 And one of his servants answered and said, Let *some* take, I pray thee, five of the horses that remain, which are left ¹ in the city, (behold, they *are* as all the multitude of Israel that are left in it: behold, *I say*, they *are* even as all the multitude of the Israelites that are consumed:) and let us send and see.

14 They took therefore two char-

iot horses; and the king sent after the host of the Syrians, saying, Go and see.

15 And they went after them unto Jordan: and, lo, all the way *was* full of garments and vessels, which the Syrians had cast away in their haste. And the messengers returned, and told the king.

16 And the people went out, and spoiled the tents of the Syrians. So a measure of fine flour was *sold* for a shekel, and two measures of barley for a shekel, according to the word of the LORD.

17 ¶ And the king appointed the lord on whose hand he had leaned to have the charge of the gate: and the people trode upon him in the gate, and he died, as the man of God had said, who spake when the king came down to him.

¹ Heb. *in it*.

11. *And he called the porters*: And the porters called. The other translation leaves the pronoun *he* without any reference. The verb is singular; but, as it stands before its subject, the connection with a plural noun is not unusual in Hebrew.

12. *And said unto his servants*: The officers and courtiers in attendance on his person are meant; officials, and not menials. *Hungry*: The word is a strong one, meaning *famished*. *We shall catch them alive, and get into the city*: Jehoram's thought was, that the Syrians were in ambush somewhere near the camp, ready to take advantage of the Israelites' unarmed rush for the deserted camp, and to take them alive without the necessity of a fight, at the same time getting possession of the defenceless city. The flight of the Syrians, when the city was all ready to fall into their hands, must have seemed incredible to the king, who knew nothing of the circumstances; and this was a very probable explanation of the empty camp.

13. *Let some take*: Let them take. The pronoun is used indefinitely. *In the city*: Literally, *in it*, the reference to the city being understood. *They are as all the multitude of Israel that are left in it*: That is, these men whom they send out to scour the country, and see if the Syrians have really gone, are no worse off than those who stay behind. They are in danger of capture, to be sure; but then, those that remain are in danger of famine. *That are consumed*: That perish. The meaning is, that they are perishing, not that they are already consumed. They are all perishing, and the manner does not matter.

14. *Two chariot horses*: The language is not capable of this translation. It may mean two horse-chariots, or two spans of horses, the complement of horses belonging to two chariots. The latter is more probable, as the designation horse-chariots is superfluous.

15. *Unto Jordan*: To the Jordan. The route of the Syrians would probably be north-east, crossing the Jordan some thirty-five miles from Samaria, and about twelve miles south of the Sea of Galilee. This is the regular road from Samaria to Syria. *Was full of garments and vessels*: Garments and baggage. The latter is the general word for the baggage of an army.

16. *So a measure of fine flour was sold for a shekel*: See verse 1, and note.

17. *The lord on whose hand he had leaned*: See on verse 2. *And the people trode upon him in the gate*: They were in the extremities of famine, and trod down every thing that stood in their way.

LESSON III.

JEHU'S FALSE ZEAL.—2 Kings 10:15-31.

A GENERAL VIEW.—In the history that comes between this lesson and the previous one, various changes are reported. First, the accession of Hazael to the throne of Syria, as had been prophesied to Elijah years before. Second, the joint reign of Jehoram with his father Jehoshaphat over Judah. How long this lasted, we are not told; but Jehoram's whole reign covered eight years. He was succeeded by his son Ahaziah. Both of these kings married into Ahab's family, and introduced the image worship of the northern kingdom into Judah. Ahaziah joined Joram, king of Israel, in his war against Hazael, king of Syria, who was the predicted scourge of Israel. Joram was wounded at Ramoth-gilead, and Ahaziah went to visit him at Jezreel. This was the moment, when the allied armies were at Ramoth-gilead, and the two kings were at Jezreel, that Elisha seized to carry out the purpose announced long before to Elijah, of anointing Jehu king over Israel; and for this purpose he sent a young man, one of the “sons of the prophets,” to Ramoth-gilead, where Jehu held a command in the army. Jehu immediately conferred with the other officers, who entered enthusiastically into his designs. Then he charged them to prevent any one carrying the tidings to the king; and he himself set out in his chariot, and drove with his proverbial fury to Jezreel. There he slew the king, and also, with the excess of zeal that characterized him, Ahaziah; then Jezebel; then seventy of Ahab's sons; then all of his kindred and servants; and finally a company of Ahaziah's brethren, who had come, in ignorance of what had taken place, to salute their kindred in the king of Israel's family. Here our lesson begins. It is to be remembered, in connection with our title,—“Jehu's False Zeal,”—that he was commanded by the prophet that anointed him, to smite the house of Ahab to the last man, and that the Lord commanded him for it, promising him because of it that his children should sit on his throne to the fourth generation; and it may well have seemed to him a strict complement to this command, that he should destroy the Baal-worshippers. But his retention of the image-worship, the original, though not the great sin of Israel, shows him to have been rather fanatical than pure in his zeal.

15 ¶ And when he was departed thence, he ¹lighted on Jehonadab the son of Rechab coming to meet him: and he ²saluted him, and said to him, Is thine heart right, as my

heart *is* with thy heart? And Jehonadab answered, It is. If it be, give *me* thine hand. And he gave *him* his hand; and he took him up to him into the chariot.

¹ Heb. *found.* ² Heb. *blessed.*

NOTES.—15. *Departed thence*: From the place near Samaria where he slew the “brethren” of the king of Judah. *He lighted on Jehonadab the son of Rechab*: He found. These Rechabites were Kenites; that is, among the original inhabitants of the land. Moses married into the tribe. Jael, who slew Sisera, belonged to them; and the connection between them and the Israelites was close from the beginning. This Jonadab made it a rule for the family of Rechab, his father, after he became head of it, that they should always dwell in tents, and should abstain from wine; and three hundred years after this, their obedience to this rule is contrasted with the light regard in which the men of Judah held the commands of Jehovah. The austerity and semi-fanaticism of the man made him a fit instrument for Jehu's purposes. (See 1 Chron. 2:55; Jer. 35.) *He saluted him*: He blessed him. *Is thine heart right*: Is it right with thy heart? Jehu means to ask, as the comparison with his own heart shows, if Jehonadab feels right towards him. It is implied that the Rechabite knew the king's deeds, and was in sympathy with them, as a stern rebuke of an effeminate and licentious race. *It is. If it be*: The Hebrew text from which our version is taken runs: “It is, it is. Give thy hand.” And there is no doubt that the whole is the language of Jehonadab. In the Septuagint, the words are inserted, “And Jehu said, If it be,” after “It is.”

16 And he said, Come with me, and see my zeal for the **LORD**. So they made him ride in his chariot.

17 And when he came to Samaria, he slew all that remained unto Ahab in Samaria, till he had destroyed him, according to the saying of the **LORD**, which he spake to Elijah.

18 ¶ And Jehu gathered all the people together, and said unto them, Ahab served Baal a little; but Jehu shall serve him much.

19 Now therefore call unto me all the prophets of Baal, all his servants, and all his priests; let none be wanting: for I have a great sacrifice to do to Baal; whosoever shall be wanting, he shall not live. But Jehu

did it in subtilty, to the intent that he might destroy the worshippers of Baal.

20 And Jehu said, ¹ Proclaim a solemn assembly for Baal. And they proclaimed it.

21 And Jehu sent through all Israel: and all the worshippers of Baal came, so that there was not a man left that came not. And they came into the house of Baal; and the house of Baal was ² full from one end to another.

22 And he said unto him that was over the vestry, Bring forth vestments for all the worshippers of Baal. And he brought them forth vestments.

¹ Heb. Sanctify. ² Or, so full, that they stood mouth to mouth.

16. *My zeal for the Lord*: The word used is one that denotes a jealous zeal, one that regarded with aversion the worship paid to other gods. *They made him ride in his chariot*: Jehu and his servants caused him to ride in the king's chariot.

17. *Till he had destroyed him*: His race, for which the pronoun here stands. *According to the saying of the Lord* (see 1 Kings 21:21): This action is stated here to be in conformity with the threat of the Lord against Ahab. And, if it were simply this, then Jehu would have been simply the unconscious instrument of executing the divine purpose; and his action, as far as he himself is concerned, might have been purely politic, rather than righteous. But it was also in fulfilment of the direct command given him by the prophet at his anointing: so that we have to decide how much selfish policy, and how much righteous obedience, there was in an act into which both so evidently entered. Certainly it is the intention of the writer to bring out as strongly and exclusively as possible the divine and right side of this part of Jehu's action.

18. *Ahab served Baal a little; but Jehu shall serve him much*: That is, by comparison, Ahab will seem to have served him little. There was some room for this; as Ahab was rather the weak instrument of Jezebel's dominant will than an active and unwavering idolater, and had periods of listening to Jehovah's prophets, and of consequent mitigation of the divine anger against him. If Jehu had carried out his pretended purpose, it would have made even Ahab's idolatry insignificant; but see 1 Kings 16:31, 32.

19. *The prophets of Baal*: A prophet was a seer, one who spoke under inspiration; and it is interesting to notice that there was this class of men, as well as the sacerdotal class, among the worshippers of Baal. In this respect, however, most religions are alike. *His servants*: His ordinary worshippers. *In subtilty*: Subtlety is the proper one of these two words; but neither is quite strong enough, as the Hebrew means *deceit*, and is not a nice word like *subtilty*.

20. *Proclaim a solemn assembly*: Sanctify a solemn assembly; appoint or institute it as a holy thing. The word translated *solemn assembly* is the word used to denote the meeting of the people to celebrate public religious rites, such as on the seventh day of the passover (see Lev. 23:36; Num. 29:35; Deut. 16:8). *They proclaimed it*: Here this translation is right.

21. *Into the house of Baal* (see 1 Kings 16:32): Unless the worshippers of Baal were an insignificant number, this house with its courts must have been of great size, as it was probably magnificent in its appointments. *From one end to another*: Literally, from mouth (that is, entrance) to mouth.

22. *To him that was over the vestry*: The wardrobe; probably the royal ward-

23 And Jehu went, and Jehonadab the son of Rechab, into the house of Baal, and said unto the worshippers of Baal, Search, and look that there be here with you none of the servants of the LORD, but the worshippers of Baal only.

24 And when they went in to offer sacrifices and burnt offerings, Jehu appointed fourscore men without, and said, If any of the men whom I have brought into your hands escape, he that letteth him go, his life shall be for the life of him.

25 And it came to pass, as soon as he had made an end of offering the burnt offering, that Jehu said to the guard and to the captains, Go in, and slay them; let none come forth.

And they smote them with¹ the edge of the sword; and the guard and the captains cast *them* out, and went to the city of the house of Baal.

26 And they brought forth the ²images out of the house of Baal, and burned them.

27 And they brake down the image of Baal, and brake down the house of Baal, and made it a draught house unto this day.

28 Thus Jehu destroyed Baal out of Israel.

29 ¶ Howbeit *from* the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin, Jehu departed not from after them, *to wit*, the golden calves that *were* in Beth-el, and that *were* in Dan.

¹ Heb. *the mouth*. ² Heb. *statues*.

robe is meant, the king pretending to give *éclat* to the occasion by providing out of his own wardrobe suitable garments for all the worshippers. Apparently his real intention was to mark the Baal-worshippers by their costume.

23. *The servants, . . . the worshippers*: Both words are the same, and should be rendered *servants*. The real purpose of this order is obvious. Its pretended object was to preserve the sanctity of the occasion by shutting out all adherents of another religion, whose presence would be regarded a sacrilege. *The Lord* should here be rendered Jehovah, as the contrast with Baal in the mouth of an assumed worshipper of Baal demands.

25. *He had made an end of offering*: Jehu offered no sacrifices himself, but the offering was done by his orders. *The guard and . . . the captains*: The runners and the chariot-warriors. Both of these bodies belonged to the body-guard of the king, the chariot-warriors being probably the more honorable. *Cast them out, and went to the city of the house of Baal*: This should read, probably, "Destroyed them. And they went even to the city of the house of Baal." The first verb may mean either *to cast down*, or *to cast out*. The former seems more probable here, denoting the action of cutting them down, as one fells a tree. *The city of the house of Baal* in any other connection would denote the quarter of the city in which the temple was situated; but as that makes no sense here, coming after the statement of the slaughter which took place within the precincts of the temple, it seems better to understand it of the temple itself, contrasted with its courts.

26. *And they brought forth the images out of the house of Baal*: This should be separated from the preceding by only a semi-colon, as denoting what they did after arriving at the temple itself. It is doubtful what these images are, which are here contrasted with the image of Baal itself. Possibly they are the mere pillars, the upright columns, used symbolically in the Ashtoreth-worship associated with that of Baal. The burning shows that they were made of wood.

27. *Made it a draught house*: They turned it to the lowest use, as a mark of contempt (see Ezra 6:11; Dan. 2:5; 3:29). *Unto this day*: The time of writing.

29. *From the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat*: The regular expression for the calf-worship instituted by the first king of Israel (see 1 Kings 12:28-30). This worship was the established worship of Jehovah in the northern kingdom, as distinctive, and as much identified with its history, as the temple worship in the southern kingdom. Jehu was fierce and fanatical, and he identified the fall of Baal-worship with that of the dynasty of

30 And the **LORD** said unto **Jehu**, Because thou hast done well in executing *that which is* right in mine eyes, and hast done unto the house of **Ahab** according to all that *was* in mine heart, thy children of the fourth generation shall sit on the throne of **Israel**.

31 But **Jehu**¹ took no heed to walk in the law of the **LORD** God of **Israel** with all his heart: for he departed not from the sins of **Jeroboam**, which made **Israel** to sin.

¹ Heb. *observed not.*

Ahab and with his own rise. But to go farther was to endanger his new power, and was the work of a prophet, not of a politic king.

30. *Thy children of the fourth generation*: The line of **Jehu** was continued in **Jehoahaz** his son, in **Jehoash** his grandson, in **Jeroboam** his great-grandson, and in **Zerubbabel**, his great-great-grandson. The first reigned seventeen years, the second sixteen years, the third forty-one years, and the fourth six months,—making seventy-four years. This, with the twenty-eight years of **Jehu**, makes a hundred and two years, the whole period of the longest dynasty in the history of the northern kingdom. It was a fitting reward for so notable a task as the extinction of the debasing worship of **Baal**.

LESSON IV.

THE TEMPLE REPAIRED.—2 Kings 12:1-15.

A GENERAL VIEW.—Our lessons have followed the fortunes of **Israel**, since the division of the kingdom, a hundred and forty years before this. Now we take up, for a single lesson, the thread of **Judah**'s history, and are brought back to the familiar precincts of the temple and of **Jerusalem**. In reviewing the intervening history of the southern kingdom, we find that **Rehoboam**, the son of **Solomon**, reigned seventeen years. His reign was neither righteous nor prosperous. Under him, the people practised idolatry and licentiousness, and the king of **Egypt** invaded the land, and plundered the temple. His son **Abijam** succeeded him, and reigned for three years, with the same general results. He was succeeded by his son **Asa**, who reigned forty-one years, during which he put down idolatry and licentiousness, and replaced the treasures of the temple. During all these reigns, there was war between **Judah** and **Israel**; but in the reign of **Jehoshaphat**, the son of **Asa**, and a man of the same spirit, the king married a daughter of **Ahab**, the king of **Israel**, and formed an alliance with him. His reign, one of the most illustrious in the history of the **Jews**, lasted twenty-five years. This alliance with **Israel** under **Ahab** bore its proper fruit in the reign of **Jehoram**, the son of **Jehoshaphat**, who reigned eight years over **Judah**. He also married a daughter of **Ahab**, and imported into **Judah** all the idolatries and impurities of **Israel**, for which he and his people were smitten with invasions and plagues. **Ahaziah** his son reigned a year in the same way, and shared the fate of **Jehoram**, the king of **Israel**, at the hands of **Jehu**. On his death, the queen-mother **Athaliah** slew all the king's sons, intending to reign herself; but the king's sister saved **Jehoash**, an infant at the time, from this slaughter, and hid him in the temple six years. At the end of this time, **Jenoada** the priest brought him out, and by a successful conspiracy had him proclaimed and instated king; and **Athaliah** was slain. It was in his reign that the restoring of the temple, which makes the subject of our lesson, took place. The occasion for this is found in 2 Chron. 24:7, where it is related that **Athaliah**'s sons, that is, **Ahaziah** and his brothers, had broken into the house of the **Lord**, and taken its sacred vessels, and given them to the worship of **Baal**. **Jehu** was king of **Israel** at the beginning of this movement for the repair of the temple, and **Jehoahaz** his son, at its close.

1 In the seventh year of Jehu, Jehoash began to reign; and forty years reigned he in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Zibiah of Beer-sheba.

2 And Jehoash did that which was right in the sight of the LORD all his days wherein Jehoiada the priest instructed him.

3 But the high places were not taken away: the people still sacrificed and burnt incense in the high places.

4 ¶ And Jehoash said to the priests, All the money of the ¹ dedi-

cated things that is brought into the house of the LORD, even the money of every one that passeth the account, ² the money that every man is set at, and all the money that ³ cometh into any man's heart to bring into the house of the LORD,

5 Let the priests take it to them, every man of his acquaintance: and let them repair the breaches of the house, wheresoever any breach shall be found.

6 But it was so, that ⁴ in the three and twentieth year of king Jehoash the priests had not repaired the breaches of the house.

¹ Or, holy things. Heb. holinesses. ² Heb. the money of the souls of his estimation, Lev. 27:2. ³ Heb. ascendeth upon the heart of a man. ⁴ Heb. in the twentieth year and third year.

NOTES.—1. *In the seventh year of Jehu*: It was in his own eighth year (see 11:21). Jehoash was the son of Ahaziah, and so Athaliah was his grandmother. Jehoshebath, who had saved his life, was his aunt; and, as she had married Jehoiada, the high-priest was his uncle. *Beer-sheba*: The proverbial place, marking the southern limit of Palestine.

2. *Did . . . right . . . all his days wherein Jehoiada the priest instructed him*: During the minority of the king, Jehoiada assumed the regency, and maintained his influence over him during all his life; but after his death, the weak king fell into the hands of evil men, and set up the idolatrous worship of his father's and his grandfather's reign again; and when Zechariah, the son of the faithful Jehoiada, rebuked this sin, the king had him put to death.

3. *But the high places were not taken away*: The standing expression for the fault in the service of Judah, as *the sin of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, wherewith he made Israel to sin*, is for the sin of Israel. The high places were chapels or altars erected on the hills. They were used for idolatrous worship when that prevailed, or for the worship of Jehovah when that was the religion of the land. The sin, or irregularity, in their use was the disregard of the provision confining worship to one sanctuary. Evidently, this sin was not recognized as such by the persons against whom it is alleged; but this is the construction put on it by the historians, who belonged to a later period. In this case, for instance, it is evident that Jehoiada did not know of the regulation, or he would have included it in his sweeping reform, as it was a rule putting the worship into the hands of the priestly order to which he belonged.

4. *All the money of the dedicated things*: The silver dedicated to the temple. Of this, three kinds are specified: First, *the money of every one that passeth the account*; i.e., of those that passed before the census taker, when he was numbering the people. All such, above twenty years of age, were required to pay what was called the half-shekel of the sanctuary (see Exod. 20:12-16). Second, *the money that every man is set at*; i.e., the valuation that the priest puts on every man who comes to make an offering of himself to the Lord. This value was set by the law in ordinary cases; but, where the person was too poor to pay this, then the priest fixed the valuation. Third, the freewill offerings of the people for the sanctuary.

5. *Every man of his acquaintance*: The priests were to turn collectors, and each man was to gather these offerings in his own neighborhood, among his acquaintances and friends.

6. *In the three and twentieth year of king Jehoash*: We do not know how

7 Then king Jehoash called for Jehoiada the priest, and the *other* priests, and said unto them, Why repair ye not the breaches of the house? now therefore receive no *more* money of your acquaintance, but deliver it for the breaches of the house.

8 And the priests consented to receive no *more* money of the people, neither to repair the breaches of the house.

9 But Jehoiada the priest took a chest, and bored a hole in the lid of it, and set it beside the altar, on the right side as one cometh into the house of the LORD: and the priests that kept the ¹ door put therein all the money *that was* brought into the house of the LORD.

10 And it was *so*, when they saw that *there was* much money in the chest, that the king's ² scribe and the

high priest came up, and they ³ put up in bags, and told the money that was found in the house of the LORD.

11 And they gave the money, being told, into the hands of them that did the work, that had the oversight of the house of the LORD: and they ⁴ laid it out to the carpenters and builders, and wrought upon the house of the LORD,

12 And to masons, and hewers of stone, and to buy timber and hewed stone to repair the breaches of the house of the LORD, and for all that ⁵ was laid out for the house to repair it.

13 Howbeit there were not made for the house of the LORD bowls of silver, snuffers, basons, trumpets, any vessels of gold, or vessels of silver, of the money *that was* brought into the house of the LORD:

¹ Heb. *threshold*. ² Or, *secretary*. ³ Heb. *bound up*. ⁴ Heb. *brought it forth*.
⁵ Heb. *went forth*.

early in his reign this order had been given, and so are ignorant how long the priests had been delaying the matter.

7. *Now therefore receive no more money of your acquaintance, but deliver it for the breaches of the house*: For ye shall give it for the breaches of the house. The question is, how they were to give what they had not received. It means that, instead of receiving it themselves, they were to give it up, and let the control of it pass into other hands. Having had the control of it before, as the custodians, and in part the beneficiaries, of the temple gifts, they had appropriated this money to its ordinary uses, instead of to the extraordinary purpose of repairing the temple.

8. *And the priests consented to receive no more money of the people, neither to repair the breaches of the house*: They gave up the custody and use of these moneys, and were relieved of the burden of repairing the temple. This statement applies only to the revenue derived from the three sources mentioned above. The trespass-money and sin-money are expressly excepted from it in verse 16.

9. *And set it beside the altar*: The altar of burnt offering in the court. As this altar was east of the temple itself, the right side of it, as one enters the temple, is the north side.

10. *The king's scribe and the high priest*: The king's secretary. The priests were the legal custodians of this sacred money, and they gave it up for only a temporary purpose. The high-priest was here, therefore, to represent them in turning the money over to the king. The scribe, or secretary, who represented the king, was a high officer who wrote the royal letters and decrees, managed the finances, and so on. *They put up in bags, and told the money*: They tied up and counted the money.

11. *They gave the money, being told*: Which was weighed out. Money was not coined, but came in bars, of which pieces were cut off and paid by weight. *That had the oversight of the house of the Lord*: Not the general oversight, in which case it would be the priests, but the superintendence of this work of repair. *And they laid it out to the carpenters and builders*: They drew it out for. The money, that is to say, was put directly into the hands of the various master-builders, and paid out by them to their employees and to the parties furnishing material for the work.

13. *Bowls of silver*: The vessels, basins, snuffers, etc., of the temple were origin-

14 But they gave that to the workmen, and repaired therewith the house of the LORD.

15 Moreover they reckoned not

with the men, into whose hand they delivered the money to be bestowed on workmen: for they dealt faithfully.

ally gold or brass; but in the changes since the time of Solomon, involving the depletion and re-furnishing of the house several times, there was room for the substitution of silver. In 2 Chron. 24:14, it is said that the balance of the money, after the repair of the house, was spent upon these things. It is possible to reconcile the two by the supposition that the statement here refers only to what was done during the repair of the house.

15. *They reckoned not with the men . . . for they dealt faithfully:* That is, they did not require an account of money received and expended from them, because they found them trustworthy.

LESSON V.

DEATH OF ELISHA.—2 Kings 13:14-25.

A GENERAL VIEW.—Elisha had become the attendant of Elijah some seventy years before this, during the reign of Ahab. He had begun his own career as a prophet ten years afterwards, near the beginning of the reign of Jehoram, Ahab's son. He had, therefore, been the contemporary of five kings. The crisis in the history of the nation that had called out these prophets was the rise of Baal-worship in the land, under the influence of Ahab, the evil genius of Israel. Up to the time of the anointing of Jehu, Elisha's work in this direction had been apparently to keep before the king and the nation the greatness of Jehovah, sometimes in direct contrast with other gods, but for the most part without any such contrast. It had been mostly, too, of a beneficent character, as if God would win his people, instead of chastising them for their sins, forming, in this respect, a strong contrast to the work of Elijah. But with the accession of Jehu came the time foretold to Elijah for the final extinction of Ahab's idolatrous race, and for a crushing blow against the worship of Baal. With this, therefore, the special occasion of Elisha's prophetic activity ceased, and we hear nothing more of him till this account of his death. However, Jehoash the king seems to be well acquainted with his greatness, fifty years after the accession of Jehu; and we may suppose, therefore, that his life had not been idle or inconspicuous during that time. He would always be remembered with gratitude by the kings of Jehu's dynasty, as the founder of their line. Since the time of Jehu's extirpation of the Baal-worshippers, which formed the subject of our last lesson but one, Jehu had reigned twenty-eight years, and Jehoahaz his son eighteen years. Both reigns have little recorded of them, except the continued and successful war of Syria against Israel. It is Elisha's prophecy of deliverance from this, that lights up this story of his death.

14 ¶ Now Elisha was fallen sick of his sickness whereof he died. And Joash the king of Israel came down unto him, and wept over his

face, and said, O my father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof.

15 And Elisha said unto him,

NOTES.—14. *Elisha was fallen sick:* He must have been about ninety years old at this time, according to the length of the several reigns given in the history; but these numbers are the most doubtful parts of the history. *Joash the king of Israel:* It has just been recorded of him, that he slept with his fathers, and now there begins a history of his reign. Evidently, in this case, there is no attempt at chronological arrangement. The history is not compactly written. Joash (or Jehoash) was the son of Jehoahaz and grandson of Jehu. *Wept over his face:* This is a possible meaning of the language employed, but more probably it means, *wept before him*. *My father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof:* The chariots.

Take bow and arrows. And he took unto him bow and arrows.

16 And he said to the king of Israel,¹ Put thine hand upon the bow. And he put his hand *upon it*: and Elisha put his hands upon the king's hands.

17 And he said, Open the window eastward. And he opened *it*. Then Elisha said, Shoot. And he shot. And he said, The arrow of the Lord's deliverance, and the arrow of deliverance from Syria: for thou shalt smite the Syrians in Aphek, till thou have consumed *them*.

18 And he said, Take the arrows. And he took *them*. And he said unto the king of Israel, Smite upon the ground. And he smote thrice, and stayed.

19 And the man of God was wroth with him, and said, Thou shouldest have smitten five or six times; then hadst thou smitten Syria till thou hadst consumed *it*: whereas now thou shalt smite Syria *but* thrice.

20 ¶ And Elisha died, and they buried him. And the bands of the Moabites invaded the land at the coming in of the year.

¹ Heb. *Make thine hand to ride.*

The coincidence of this with Elisha's own lament over Elijah is noticeable. It is in itself a striking lament over the departure of a great man,—as if the strength and defence of the nation went with him,—and having once been used, whether by Elisha or some one else, it would come naturally into familiar use. The lament of the king did not come from any appreciation of the religious worth of the prophet, for we are told that Jehoash did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord; but his reign had fallen on troublous times, when Israel was ground under the heel of its powerful neighbor Syria. This had begun in the reign of Jehu (see 10: 32, 33), and had continued and increased in the reign of Jehoahaz (see verses 3, 7); and Jehoash did feel, that, in the death of the prophet, the nation was losing its great bulwark, and intercessor with the God of Israel.

16. *And he put his hand upon it: and Elisha put his hands upon the king's hands*: The familiar sign of blessing, and also of the transmission of miraculous power. Elisha signified by it that he conveyed the divine blessing to the arms of the king. He answered and consoled the king by this assurance, that, though he departed, he left his blessing behind him.

17. *Open the window eastward*: He wished it opened toward the scene of Israel's wars with Syria. The territory that Syria captured from Jehu was east of the Jordan, the districts of Gilead and Bashan, from the river Arnon about midway of the Dead Sea northwards; and Aphek, which is designated in the prophecy as the scene of the promised discomfiture of Syria, is in the same territory. *The arrow of the Lord's deliverance, and the arrow of deliverance from Syria*: Probably, considering the preposition before the word *Syria*, it should read *the Lord's victory*, and *victory over Syria*. The prophet saw in the king's arms the instrument that Jehovah would use to give victory over Israel's enemies. *Till thou have consumed them*: The promise is not only of victory, but of extermination.

18. *Smite upon the ground*: This verb is used of smiting with a weapon held in the hand, or with a missile thrown from the hand; and here as the weapon used is a missile, and there were several of them in the king's hand, it is probable that he shot them, one by one, to the ground.

19. *The man of God was wroth with him*: This may strike us as a trivial cause for such anger; but probably he saw a listlessness in the king's manner, of which the number of arrows shot was an indication. And this would betray a lack of faith. For if there had been real faith, so that, as the prophet spoke, the vision of the discomfited Syria came before the king's imagination, he would have entered into the prophet's pantomime, and shot out his arrows as if at a real foe.

20. *And Elisha died, and they buried him*: Josephus says that "he received a funeral befitting his greatness." *The bands of the Moabites invaded the land at the coming in of the year*: That is, according to the Jewish calendar, in the

21 And it came to pass, as they were burying a man, that, behold, they spied a band of *men*; and they cast the man into the sepulchre of Elisha: and when the man ¹ was let down, and touched the bones of Elisha, he revived, and stood up on his feet.

22 ¶ But Hazael king of Syria oppressed Israel all the days of Jehoahaz.

23 And the LORD was gracious unto them, and had compassion on them, and had respect unto them,

because of his covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and would not destroy them, neither cast he them from his ² presence as yet.

24 So Hazael ¹king of Syria died; and Ben-hadad his son reigned in his stead.

25 And Jehoash the son of Jehoahaz ³took again out of the hand of Ben-hadad the son of Hazael the cities, which he had taken out of the hand of Jehoahaz his father by war. Three times did Joash beat him, and recovered the cities of Israel.

¹ Heb. *went down*. ² Heb. *face*. ³ Heb. *returned and took*.

spring. The power of the Moabites to make war in force against Israel had been pretty effectually broken in their disastrous overthrow at the beginning of Jehoram's reign (see 3: 5-25). These invasions are only the predatory excursions of marauding bands, such as belong to border lands.

21. *They spied a band*: The band; i.e., of the Moabites. *They cast the man into the sepulchre of Elisha*: They were alarmed at the approach of the enemy, and thrust the man in anywhere. The Jews buried their dead in natural caves or crevices of the rocks and hills, or in artificial cells excavated in the same; and so an event like this is quite natural, as it would be to thrust a body in haste into the wrong chamber of a tomb now. *And when the man was let down, and touched the bones of Elisha*: And he came and touched the bones. As the body was thrust (not lowered) into the tomb, it came to the place where Elisha was buried, and touched his bones. This miracle was remembered by the Jews as the crowning glory of Elisha's career, and it was certainly very wonderful.

22. *Oppressed Israel all the days of Jehoahaz*: The history goes back again here, but not so capriciously as in verse 14. Here it recapitulates the story of Syria's oppression during the reign of Jehoahaz, in order to introduce the story of deliverance in the time of Jehoash.

23. *Had respect unto them*: Turned unto them, took their part. *Because of his covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob*: In giving reason for this same mercy to Judah, God's covenant with David is remembered (see 1 Kings 15: 4, 5); but here it is necessary to go back to the patriarchs, and find some righteousness in which Israel, as well as Judah, had a part. *Neither cast he them from his presence as yet*: This is said evidently with reference to a time, already past when this was written, in which they were cast off.

24. *So Hazael king of Syria died*: And Hazael . . . died. There seems to be some connection between his death and Israel's recovery of its lost ground. He was evidently a powerful and energetic prince, whose success over his enemies was foreseen, so that he was the foreordained scourge of Israel. His son Benhadad, on the contrary, was apparently a weak prince, in whose hands the power of Syria waned. Notice that Hazael gave to his son the name Benhadad, which belonged to the dynasty that he displaced. It means son of Hadad, and Hadad was the name of some Syrian deity. The name was probably a religious title of the Syrian kings.

25. *Three times did Joash beat him* (see verses 18, 19): This recovery of Israel from under the hand of Syria was completed by Jeroboam the son of Jehoash, who pushed his conquest so as to "recover" Damascus, and even Hamath, which lay over a hundred and seventy miles north of Damascus.

LESSON VI.

THE STORY OF JONAH.—Jon. 1:1-17.

A GENERAL VIEW.—This account of Jonah is one of the most singular and interesting things in the Old Testament. The remarkable story with which it begins has had the result of distracting attention from the really more important events that follow, in which there is the same difficulty that characterizes the whole account, and yet a unique interest and significance. As to the story of the great fish, we scarcely think that the difficulty is simply the same as in any miracle. There is a grotesqueness about this, that leaves a doubt in some minds that have no difficulty at all with the miracles of Jesus; but to believers in the infallible Scriptures, the objection is not insuperable. But, when we pass on from this to the prophet's work, we find some things more important and interesting than this. In the first place, Assyria and Israel had not crossed each other's path before this. The Israelites were girdled about with numerous nations,—Egypt being a first-class power, and Syria nearly that, but the rest being comparatively small and unimportant peoples; and their dealings and contentions had been, up to this time, with these immediate neighbors. For a prophet like Elisha to interfere in the affairs of one of these nations, like Syria, was not, therefore, specially strange. It was an indirect way of influencing the course of events in his own country. But to cross the Euphrates, which separated Israel from the regions beyond, and to advance even to the Tigris, at a time when events had not traversed the intervening hundreds of miles, and to do this single-handed and alone, on a strange, prophetic mission, is, to say the least, a strange episode in the history of this remarkable Israelitish nation. But more significant than this is the mission of Jonah to a Gentile people. It is one of the few cases in which God appears, in the Old Testament, as the God of the whole earth, and not of the Jewish people only; and the insertion of the history into the canon is an indication of a broader spirit among the Jews themselves than the general drift of their history and literature witnesses. It is like the Book of Ecclesiastes in this respect, that it is a sign of cross-currents in Jewish thought—a mark that the peculiarities of Judaism were, after all, only dominant and not exclusive. There is, at least, this book to show that the religious exclusiveness of the Jews, which made the "uncircumcised Gentiles" an outside, hated world, was not the only thought about the rest of the nations that found place among them.

<p>1 Now the word of the LORD came unto ¹ Jonah the son of Amitai, say-</p>	<p>2 Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it; for their wickedness is come up before me.</p>
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¹ Called, Matt. 12: 39, *Jonas*.

NOTES.—1. *Jonah the son of Amitai*: There is one mention of this prophet in the historical books, in 2 Kings 14: 25, where Jeroboam's re-extension of the territory of Israel is said to have been prophesied by him. In the absence of evidence to the contrary, we may suppose, therefore, that Jonah was a contemporary of this king, B.C. 825-789. According to this, he was a little the senior of Amos, Hosea, and Joel, and the earliest of the minor prophets. In 2 Kings, he is said to belong to Gath-hepher. This was a little place in the tribe of Zebulun, about midway between the Nazareth and Cana of our Lord's time, and not more than two or three miles from either. The tomb of Jonah is still shown there.

2. *Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city*: The great city. This was the capital of Assyria, and one of the oldest and greatest cities recorded in history. It was founded

3 But Jonah rose up to flee unto Tarshish from the presence of the LORD, and went down to Joppa; and he found a ship going to Tarshish: so he paid the fare thereof, and went down into it, to go with them unto Tarshish from the presence of the LORD.

4 ¶ But the LORD ¹ sent out a great wind into the sea, and there was a mighty tempest in the sea, so that the ship was ² like to be broken.

5 Then the mariners were afraid, and cried every man unto his god, and cast forth the wares that were in the ship into the sea, to lighten it of them. But Jonah was gone down into the sides of the ship; and he lay, and was fast asleep.

6 So the shipmaster came to him, and said unto him, What meanest thou, O sleeper? arise, call upon thy God, if so be that God will think upon us, that we perish not.

¹ Heb. *cast forth*. ² Heb. *thought to be broken*.

by Nimrod, the grandson of Ham (see Gen 10: 8-12). It is said to be a three-days' journey about its walls (chap. 3: 3), and in profane history they are said to have been sixty miles in circumference. In accordance with these statements, ruins have been found on the site of the ancient city, in several groups, each of them several miles in circumference, and at distances of miles from each other; all of which, if not enclosed by a single wall, probably belonged to the "great city." The city was destroyed B. C. 606, some two hundred years after this. *And cry against it:* The object of God in denouncing the sin of the Ninevites, and its punishment, was to lead to their repentance. This is so in the nature of things, and it appears also in the sequel (see chap. 3).

3. *Rose up to flee unto Tarshish from the presence of the Lord:* In the other passages in the Old Testament in which Tarshish occurs, it is probable that Tartessus, a Phœnician settlement on the southern coast of Spain, is meant. Here, more probably, a nearer place is intended; and the identity of name makes it at least a plausible conjecture that Tarsus in Cilicia is the place. What *from the presence of* means, would be very plain if the presence were that of a man; and it accords strictly with the anthropomorphic language of the Hebrews, that it should be used of the divine presence, even though that is universal, and so cannot be avoided. He wished to escape from the land where Jehovah had appeared to him, and where he was in the habit of manifesting himself, and so, if possible, from the disagreeable task imposed on him. It appears, moreover, in this history, and throughout the Old Testament, that this was something more than a matter of language,—that the Hebrews had very human ways of regarding and treating Jehovah. *Joppa:* The seaport of Jerusalem. It might have been from some place in southern Palestine that Jonah fled, since there were other ports more accessible and safer farther north. The reason that Jonah avoided this mission is stated in 4: 2. It was not the greatness or difficulty or danger of the task that he feared: but his apprehension was, that the Ninevites would repent, and so escape the doom denounced against them; and he did not wish to be the messenger of God's mercy to the hated Gentiles.

5. *And cried every man unto his god:* The vessels of this coast were Phœnician; and their crews were probably the motley mixture of all races, with each man having his own god, that a ship's crew generally presents. *To lighten it of them:* This would mean *to lighten the ship of her burden*, so that she would ride more easily; but the Hebrew will not bear this meaning, except indirectly. It means, *to lighten the burden, or lift it, from themselves*; i.e., to lift the impending danger from them. *The sides of the ship:* The hold. Jonah had gone there, and fallen asleep, probably before the storm.

6. *What meanest thou, O sleeper?* The expression is one of surprise at his sleeping, and asks what is the matter with him, that he sleeps in such a storm. *Call upon thy God, if so be that God will think upon us:* Call upon thy god, if so be that the god will bethink himself of us. To print the word *God* with a capital initial, and omit the article before the second one, is to import the Hebrew monotheism into the idolatrous

7 And they said every one to his fellow, Come, and let us cast lots, that we may know for whose cause this evil is upon us. So they cast lots, and the lot fell upon Jonah.

8 Then they said unto him, Tell us, we pray thee, for whose cause this evil is upon us; What is thine occupation? and whence comest thou? what is thy country? and of what people art thou?

9 And he said unto them, I am an Hebrew; and I fear ¹ the LORD, the God of heaven, which hath made the sea and the dry land.

10 Then were the men ² exceedingly afraid, and said unto him, Why hast thou done this? For the men knew that he fled from the presence of the LORD, because he had told them.

11 ¶ Then said they unto him, What shall we do unto thee, that the sea ³ may be calm unto us? for the sea ⁴ wrought, and was tempestuous.

12 And he said unto them, Take me up, and cast me forth into the sea; so shall the sea be calm unto you: for I know that for my sake this great tempest is upon you.

¹ Or, JEHOVAH. ² Heb. with great fear. ³ Heb. may be silent from us. ⁴ Or, grew more and more tempestuous. Heb. went.

captain's mouth. What he wants is, that Jonah should pray to his god, as the rest of them were doing, with the chance that one of them might light on the god who was making this disturbance, and appease him.

7. *Come, and let us cast lots, that we may know for whose cause this evil is upon us:* Their prayers had not averted the storm, and so they concluded that there was some one among them who had offended the gods. For the common belief about deciding a matter by lot, see Prov. 16: 33.

8. *Tell us, we pray thee, for whose cause this evil is upon us:* They had traced the evil so far as to connect it with him. It is characteristic of the moderation with which these heathen act throughout, that they do not immediately decide that he is guilty, but only that he knows the cause of their trouble. The other questions are meant to throw light on the cause of the disaster.

9. *I am an Hebrew:* This is the name by which the Jews were known among foreigners, as *Israelite* denotes them among themselves. It is a descriptive word, denoting them as people who came from beyond the River Euphrates, as distinguished from the Canaanites, the original inhabitants of Palestine. *And I fear the Lord:* And I fear Jehovah. The translation *Lord* is allowable in some places, where it makes no difference whether a name or a descriptive title is used; but here the distinctive name, and not the title, which heathen would apply to any god, is necessary, and should be preserved in the translation. The statement that he fears Jehovah is to be taken in its ordinary sense,—that he reverences or worships him. *Who made the sea and the dry land:* And who is therefore the author of this storm.

10. *Then were the men exceedingly afraid:* Literally, And the men feared a great fear. *For the men knew that he fled from the presence of the Lord, because he had told them:* Their fear, that is to say, came from what Jonah said about the power of his God, and from the certainty that the storm was due to his anger.

11. *What shall we do unto thee, that the sea may be calm unto us?* May subside from upon us, literally. The sea was upon them, in a hostile sense,—it was overwhelming them; and as it subsided, this ceased. *For the sea wrought, and was tempestuous:* For the sea grew more and more tempestuous.

12. *Take me up and cast me forth into the sea.* Jonah saw that the Lord had sent the storm to prevent his continuing the voyage, and that when this was accomplished, the sea would subside. He was a prophet of Jehovah, accustomed to connect sin and punishment together in the case of others; and it was plain enough to him that his attempt to escape from the presence of Jehovah had had this disastrous ending. To suppose that he had had further intimation as to the events that were to follow, is gratuitous.

Lesson VII. EFFECT OF JONAH'S PREACHING. *Jon. 3:1-10.*

13 Nevertheless the men ¹rowed hard to bring *it* to the land; but they could not: for the sea wrought, and was tempestuous against them.

14 Wherefore they cried unto the LORD, and said, We beseech thee, O LORD, we beseech thee, let us not perish for this man's life, and lay not upon us innocent blood: for thou, O LORD, hast done as it pleased thee.

15 So they took up Jonah, and cast him forth into the sea: and the sea ²ceased from her raging.

16 Then the men feared the LORD exceedingly, and ³offered a sacrifice unto the LORD, and made vows.

17 ¶ Now the LORD had prepared a great fish to swallow up Jonah. And Jonah was in the ⁴belly of the fish three days and three nights.

¹ Heb. *digged*. ² Heb. *stood* ³ Heb. *sacrificed a sacrifice unto the LORD, and vowed vows.* ⁴ Heb. *bowels*.

13. *The men rowed hard to bring it to the land*: To bring it back to the land. The merchant ships of the ancients were not propelled entirely by oars, but were fitted with banks of oars for such emergencies as this. The word used here is a figurative term, but it probably applies to rowing. *For the sea wrought, and was tempestuous* (see on verse 11): This conduct of the sailors, in attempting to bring Jonah back to land when they had been told that they needed only to cast him overboard, is generous and considerate, and in keeping with what we have seen already in verse 8. It shows, too, a disposition in them to look at the favorable thing in Jonah's case, — that he was a prophet of this powerful god Jehovah, — as well as the adverse fact that he was at this time in disgrace. Whether it is intended or not, there is a contrast throughout the book between Jews and Gentiles; and it is favorable to the latter.

14. *Wherefore, they cried unto the Lord*: And they cried unto Jehovah. *Lay not upon us innocent blood*: In spite of the prophet's denunciation of himself, they saw in his bearing and manner what convinced them that he was a holy man, whose death they feared would be laid at their door, as the shedding of innocent blood. *For thou, Lord, hast done as it pleased thee*: They were following out the evident design of Jehovah, though they could not see clearly the reason of it. But the storm, the result of the lot, Jonah's own confession, and finally the failure of their attempt to bring him to shore, had all been Jehovah's carrying out of his pleasure; and it was this that had led, as they supposed, to Jonah's certain death.

16. *Then the men feared the Lord exceedingly*: The sudden cessation of the storm, in connection with the whole preceding course of events, led them to feel that they were indeed dealing with a true and powerful deity.

17. *Now the Lord had prepared a great fish*: The verb does not necessarily denote creation specially for this purpose, but simply appointment. He was designated by Jehovah to do this work.

LESSON VII.

EFFECT OF JONAH'S PREACHING.—*Jon. 3:1-10.*

A GENERAL VIEW. — We have spoken already of the singular character of Jonah's mission. He was a Hebrew prophet, belonging to a nation which believed that theirs was the one true God, and that they alone were his people. All other nations they regarded as God's enemies, and therefore exposed to his wrath; and they believed that the divine favor and mercy were reserved for them. All their religious literature is imbued with this view, that they had an exclusive right in Jeho'ah, and that, as there was no other god to fall back upon, the condition of the other nations was one without hope. Moreover, this was a state of things in which they gloried, and which they did not wish to see cease. The other nations were their enemies; and they did not wish, therefore, to see them ad-

mitted to God's favor, except on terms of absorption in Judaism. For a Hebrew prophet, therefore, to be sent to one of these other nations with a warning of its doom, such as might result in its repentance, and so in averting that doom, was the transfer to another people of those gracious divine methods that the Jews appropriated to themselves. But the effect of this preaching was equally remarkable. The Ninevites, although strangers to Israel's God, and though Jonah's preaching was accompanied by no miraculous sign, and there does not seem to have been any thing in the state of the nation to confirm the prophet's warning, yet repented, so that the threatened destruction was turned aside. It can be accounted for only as one of those strange excitements of popular feeling, in which the ordinary slow processes of national change are replaced by a sudden cataclysm, a flood of strange excitements. We have to deal here, moreover, with an Eastern people, in whom such sudden outbreaks are not unusual. And, in the absence of other causes, we may picture to ourselves Jonah as a man fitted to produce this effect. He impressed the Phœnician sailors with his holiness; and we may well believe that there was that awe and earnestness about the man and his words, that carried conviction, and impressed men that here was one who had commerce with the heavenly powers.

1 And the word of the LORD came unto Jonah the second time, saying,

2 Arise, Go unto Nineveh, that great city, and preach unto it the preaching that I bid thee.

3 So Jonah arose, and went unto Nineveh, according to the word of the LORD. Now Nineveh was an exceeding great city of three days' journey.

4 And Jonah began to enter into the city a day's journey, and he cried, and said, Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown.

5 ¶ So the people of Nineveh believed God, and proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them even to the least of them.

¹ Heb. of God: So Gen. 30:8; Ps. 36:6; and 80:10.

NOTES.—2. *Preach unto it the preaching:* This word *preach* is made to do duty in translating a number of words in both the Old and New Testaments, and the color and variety of the original is lost by just so much. Here the meaning is *Cry the cry*, as in verse 4. He was sent, not to reason with the people, or indulge in prolonged discourse, but to cry out in the streets of their great city its doom.

3. *An exceeding great city of three days' journey:* A city great unto God, etc. The Hebrew has this way of denoting what is extraordinary. The three days' journey is probably a time-measure of the circuit of the walls, making, according to the different lengths ascribed to a day's walk or march, between fifty and sixty miles (see on 1:2).

4. *And Jonah began to enter into the city a day's journey:* The difficulty of this expression is increased by translating the infinitive *enter* instead of *go*. He began to go into, or to penetrate, the city, and got as far as one day's walk, when he found that the effect had been produced, and he stopped. *Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown:* That is, forty days more, and it shall be destroyed. The word *overthrown* is in the original a strong word, being the same as that used to denote the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah.

5. *So the people of Nineveh believed God:* And . . . believed in God. The word for God throughout the chapter is not the distinctive name "Jehovah," but the general term "god" applicable to any deity, or to deity in general; and this represents, probably, the truth of this matter. The sin dwelt on in this preaching of Jonah does not seem to have been the worship of false gods, in which case the repentance of Nineveh would have been simply unaccountable, but evil ways and violence (verse 8); and so the repentance does not single out any particular god, but addresses itself to the god who dwells in the heavens, whoever he may be. *And put on sackcloth:* A coarse, rough cloth, used for sacking, sieves, etc., but especially as a sign of mourning or humiliation.

Lesson VII. EFFECT OF JONAH'S PREACHING. *Jon. 3:1-10.*

6 For word came unto the king of Nineveh, and he arose from his throne, and he laid his robe from him, and covered *him* with sack-cloth, and sat in ashes.

7 And he caused *it* to be proclaimed and ¹ published through Nineveh by the decree of the king and his ² nobles, saying, Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste any thing: let them not feed, nor drink water:

8 But let man and beast be cov-

ered with sackcloth, and cry mightily unto God: yea, let them turn every one from his evil way, and from the violence that *is* in their hands.

9 Who can tell *if* God will turn and repent, and turn away from his fierce anger, that we perish not?

10 ¶ And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil, that he had said that he would do unto them; and he did *it* not.

¹ Heb. *said.* ² Heb. *great men.*

6. *For word came unto the king of Nineveh:* And the word came. The king of Nineveh is the king of Assyria, having his capital at Nineveh. Who this king was, we cannot tell exactly. There were three kings contemporary with Jonah, supposing him to have lived in the period assigned him in the preceding lesson. *He laid his robe from him:* That is, the wide cloak or mantle forming his outside garment, and made of some rich material, substituting for it the coarse sackcloth. *And sat in ashes:* In the ashes. This is as common an expression of sorrow as the sackcloth; the person either sprinkling ashes over him, or sitting on a heap of them, or even wallowing in them. The general purpose is the disfigurement of the person (see Matt. 6: 16).

7. *And he caused it to be proclaimed and published:* And he made proclamation, and said. *And his nobles:* His great men. *Let neither man nor beast:* This extension of the fast to their flocks and herds is in line with the general Eastern demonstrativeness, especially in religious matters. They naturally sought as strong and vivid an expression of their feelings as possible. Their idea was to make an impression on God by the picture of a whole land in mourning.

8. *Let man and beast be covered with sackcloth:* The purpose of this is the same as in the fasting. *And cry mightily unto God: yea, let them turn every one from his evil way:* This translation separates what follows the colon from the preceding, so that the crying mightily unto God seems to be urged on both man and beast, but not the turning from their evil ways; but in the Hebrew it reads right along, "And let them cry, . . . and let them turn;" and there is just as much reason for continuing the subject, *man and beast*, to the third clause as to the second. In reality, it extends to neither, but the general subject *men* is retained. In the last part of this verse the real signs of repentance, the "works meet for repentance," take the place of the mere symbols. *The violence that is in their hands:* This is very practical, and in the true line of the best Hebrew conception of righteousness. God is, in their conception, pre-eminently a righteous being, to be served by righteousness; and the way to return to him is to cease from violence and oppression. The hand of Jonah is evident in this part of the proclamation.

9. *Who can tell if God:* Who knows but God. The question implies that, in spite of his threatening, God may yet be placated, and spare them.

10. *And God saw their works:* The national act of repentance was divided into many individual acts. *And God repented of the evil, . . . and he did it not:* The threat in the first place had moral grounds, being pronounced against evil men because of their sin; and this always implies the condition that the cause continues, else the threat is invalid. For just the same reason that an evil man must be punished, a repentant man must be forgiven. An exemplary, merely monitory infliction may be persisted in, but a threatened destruction can proceed only on the supposition that the sin continues. To repent in this case of the evil threatened is not any thing derogatory to the divine immutability, but is the necessary consequence of it.

LESSON VIII.

HEZEKIAH'S GOOD REIGN.—2 Kings 18:1-12.

A GENERAL VIEW.—We are coming now to the great crisis in the history of the chosen people. Our lesson contains an account of the capture of Samaria, and with it the extinction of the northern kingdom; and the beginning of the end was already to be seen in the southern kingdom as well. A power was rising in the East, destined to be one of the great world-powers; and when the small, and now sinful and enervated, people of the Jews came into contact with Assyria, it was only a question of time when they should be subjugated, if not extinguished. Before this, we have had to do with the varying fortunes of the nation in its wars with the second or third rate powers immediately surrounding it: now we are in its last period, when it is declining from causes of weakness within, and is menaced by a vastly superior power without. Our last glimpse of Israel was in the reign of Jehoash, a comparatively powerful king, who resisted successfully the encroachments of Syria. He was succeeded by his son Jeroboam, who completed the discomfiture of Syria, and had the longest and most successful reign allotted to any northern king; but his son Zechariah was displaced and slain, after six months' reign, by a usurper Shallum. He, in his turn, fell a victim, after one month, to Menahem. In his reign the Assyrians invaded the land, and exacted tribute. His son Pekahiah was overthrown by Pekah, another conspirator, in whose reign the Assyrians came again, and subdued Galilee and the country east of the Jordan. Finally, Hoshea conspired against him; and in his reign the Assyrians made an end of the northern kingdom. Meantime, in the southern kingdom, Amaziah, a good but weak prince, who succumbed to the power of Israel, had reigned twenty-nine years. His son Uzziah, or Azariah, succeeded him, and reigned fifty-two years, a good and prosperous king. And his son Jotham had a like reign of sixteen years. Then came the break. Ahaz, the son of Jotham, being sore pressed by Syria, obtained help from Assyria, and paid for it with homage and tribute. He reigned sixteen years; and then came Hezekiah with the religious reformation of his reign, which, with that in Josiah's reign, averted the final catastrophe only two generations.

1 Now it came to pass in the third year of Hoshea son of Elah king of Israel, that Hezekiah the son of Ahaz king of Judah began to reign.

2 Twenty and five years old was he when he began to reign; and he

reigned twenty and nine years in Jerusalem. His mother's name also was Abi, the daughter of Zechariah.

3 And he did *that which was right* in the sight of the LORD, according to all that David his father did.

NOTES.—1. *In the third year of Hoshea, king of Israel:* The last, ill-fated king. Hezekiah's reign turned the tide for a time in Judah, but it witnessed the overthrow of Israel (see above, and chapter 17 and 18:9-12). *The son of Ahaz:* The reign of Ahaz was not only unfortunate, as related above, but wicked. He worshipped Molech, Baal, and the gods of the Syrians (see 2 Chron. 28:1-4, 23-25).

2. *Twenty and five years old:* According to 16:2, Ahaz was thirty-six years old when he died, and so Hezekiah was only eleven years his father's junior. This is only another instance of the perverseness of the Old-Testament figures. *Abi, the daughter of Zechariah:* Called, in 2 Chron. 29:1, Abijah.

3. *And he did that which was right in the sight of the Lord:* This is said without qualification of only one king preceding him,—Asa, the third from Solomon, whose reign began two hundred and thirty years before.

4 ¶ He removed the high places, and brake the ¹images, and cut down the groves, and brake in pieces the brazen serpent that Moses had made: for unto those days the children of Israel did burn incense to it: and he called it ²Nehushtan.

5 He trusted in the LORD God of Israel; so that after him was none like him among all the kings of

Judah, nor *any* that were before him.

6 For he clave to the LORD, and departed not ³from following him, but kept his commandments, which the LORD commanded Moses.

7 And the LORD was with him; and he prospered whithersoever he went forth. and he rebelled against the king of Assyria, and served him not.

¹ Heb. *statues* ² That is, *A piece of brass*. ³ Heb. *from after him*.

4. **He removed the high places:** This was an unprecedented reformation. The high places were the local shrines scattered all over the land, and worship at them had been practised and sanctioned by all the kings and prophets of the nation. Even David and Solomon, although they had established the central altar at Jerusalem, had not attempted to restrict worship to that, although such restriction is commanded in the law. The worship of the high places, which meant simply the worship of Jehovah at the homes of the people instead of being obliged to go up to Jerusalem to do sacrifice, was deeply rooted in the hearts of the people; and the centralizing of that worship, though a move in the direction of purity, must have met with stout resistance. Accordingly, we find in 2 Chron. 31: 1, that this reformation was the result of an outburst of religious enthusiasm kindled by Hezekiah's great passover. The people gathered from all the land, Israel and Judah alike, went out in bands, and destroyed not only the idolatrous images and Asherim, but also the high places and altars for the local worship of Jehovah. What the king would have found it difficult to repress by force, he swept away by a great popular movement. **The images:** Of various deities—idols. **And cut down the groves:** The Asherim, or wooden pillars connected with the worship of Ashtoreth (see 1 Kings 16: 33; Note in Lesson III., Third Quarter). **And brake in pieces the brazen serpent that Moses had made:** There is no mention of this in the history, from the time that it was first made (Num. 21) to this sudden re-appearance. Serpent-worship was common in all the nations of the East, association with whom might easily lead to an undue reverence for this sacred relic. **And he called it Nehushtan:** This is translated *They called it* by some commentators; but the form of the verb does not permit this, except as a rare usage, and there seems to be no call for it here. The name means *a brazen thing*, and, if applied by the king, would express contempt. The idolatry overthrown by the king was in part set up by Ahaz his father (see chapter 16); but the worship of Jehovah and of false gods existed together throughout the history, and the fortunes of each only fluctuated in the different reigns according to the religion of the court, but neither ever extinguished the other.

5. **He trusted in the Lord God of Israel:** In Jehovah, the God of Israel. **After him was none like him, . . . nor any that were before him:** The same statement is made of Josiah (chapter 23: 25); and, as both cannot be true, it is to be taken as a rhetorical form of saying that he was an extraordinary king.

6. **For he clave to the Lord:** He clung to him; did not allow himself to be drawn off into idolatry or disobedience.

7. **And the Lord was with him:** God was at his side to help him, and insured him success in all his enterprises. **He prospered whithersoever he went forth:** He prospered in all the going forth that he did; i.e., in all his expeditions. **He rebelled against the king of Assyria, and served him not:** This is put in here evidently as one indication of the prosperity that the Lord gave him. The subjection to Assyria that he threw off was the payment of tribute and the suzerainty accorded by Ahaz in return for Assyria's aid against Syria (see 16: 7, sq.). Shalmaneser was king of Assyria at the time.

8 He smote the Philistines, *even unto*¹ Gaza, and the borders thereof, from the tower of the watchmen to the fenced city.

9 ¶ And it came to pass in the fourth year of king Hezekiah, which was the seventh year of Hoshea son of Elah king of Israel, *that* Shalmaneser king of Assyria came up against Samaria, and besieged it.

10 And at the end of three years they took it: *even* in the sixth year of Hezekiah, that *is* the ninth year

of Hoshea king of Israel, Samaria was taken.

11 And the king of Assyria did carry away Israel unto Assyria, and put them in Halah and in Habor *by* the river of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes:

12 Because they obeyed not the voice of the LORD their God, but transgressed his covenant, *and* all that Moses the servant of the LORD commanded, and would not hear them, nor do them.

¹ Heb. *Azzah*.

Sargon succeeded him, and was in his turn succeeded by Sennacherib. Whatever immunity Hezekiah may have enjoyed under the former, his land was twice invaded by Sennacherib, who was bought off the first time by a heavy tribute, and driven off by a plague finally. (See verses 13-16; chapter 18: 17-19: 35.)

8. *He smote the Philistines, even unto Gaza*: In 2 Chron. 28: 16-18, it is related that the Philistines had invaded the low country of Judaea, and captured its cities; and that Ahaz had, in this matter also, implored help of the Assyrians, who exacted tribute of him without helping him. And the Assyrian records show that at this time Assyria overran all Philistia. This invasion of the country of the Philistines was, therefore, a part of Hezekiah's rebellion against Assyria, since the country invaded belonged to her domain.

From the tower of the watchmen to the fenced city: The tower of the watchmen was the tower set up in the pasture-lands or uninhabited parts of the country for the protection of the flocks, — a solitary landmark; while the fenced city was the walled city built for the largest and most important groups of population. The expression means, therefore, *from the smallest to the largest places*.

9. *Shalmaneser king of Assyria came up against Samaria*: The subjection of Israel to Assyria began in the reign of Menahem, when Pul, the king of Assyria, exacted tribute of him. This was followed up in the reign of Pekah by an invasion and conquest of all the country east of the Jordan. Then Hoshea attempted to form an alliance with Egypt, and neglected to send the customary tribute to Assyria, which led finally to the extermination of the northern kingdom. This Shalmaneser is but little known outside of this record, as Sargon, who usurped his throne, destroyed his monumental records.

11. *And the king of Assyria did carry away Israel into Assyria*: The previous account, of which this is only a *résumé*, adds that he colonized the depopulated territory with Assyrians. It is one of the vexed questions of biblical history, whether these new Samaritans were wholly of heathen extraction, or whether there was an admixture among them of the Israelites. *In Halah and in Habor by the river of Gozan*: In Halah and by the Habor the river of Gozan. Halah was probably a province east of the Tigris; and Habor, = Khabour, was the principal branch of the Euphrates, on the banks of which was the province of Gozan, = Gauzanitis. *In the cities of the Medes*: Media lay still farther east, extending to the Caspian Sea. They were scattered, therefore, over a wide territory.

LESSON IX.

HEZEKIAH'S PRAYER ANSWERED.—2 Kings 20:1-17.

A GENERAL VIEW.—With the chapters immediately preceding this lesson, and giving an account of Sennacherib's invasions of Judah, with their disastrous conclusion, and of his death, followed by the succession of his son Esarhaddon, the history takes its leave of Assyria. That kingdom was still in the height of its power, and probably Judah continued to be tributary to it. But there was no collision between them requiring notice in the history; and in the reign of Josiah there was a temporary submission to Egypt, owing to a transient advantage that this kingdom obtained over Assyria. And in the next reign, Babylon, which had been maintaining a *quasi*-independence against Assyria for some time, and had just aided in the destruction of that kingdom, appears as the final subjugator of Judah. This change is foreshadowed in our lesson, in the embassy from the king of Babylon to Hezekiah, and in the prediction of Isaiah the prophet. This greatest of all the prophets appears here in his true light, not as a mere predictor of the future, nor even as a preacher, but as a man of affairs, taking part in the life of the court and of the nation, with just this difference between him and other men, that he brought to these affairs the moral and religious view of things, with an occasional prediction intended to confirm that view.

I In those days was Hezekiah sick unto death. And the prophet Isaiah the son of Amoz came to him, and said unto him, Thus saith the LORD, ¹ Set thine house in order; for thou shalt die, and not live.

¹ Heb. *Give charge concerning thine house*, 2 Sam. 17:23.

NOTES.—I. *In those days was Hezekiah sick unto death*: We have here a very general notation of time; but the date is fixed for us by the statement in verse 6, that Hezekiah's reign was to continue after this fifteen years. As his whole reign lasted twenty-nine years, it would place this event in the fifteenth year of it. It is more difficult, however, to locate it with reference to other events. By reference, however, to verse 6, it appears that the deliverance of Jerusalem out of the hand of Assyria was to follow this; but both the invasions of Judah previously mentioned were during the reign of Sennacherib, whereas this event must have been in the reign of Sargon his predecessor: so that this illness of the king probably preceded the other recorded events of his reign, except his religious reformations. *The prophet Isaiah, the son of Amoz*: He is not mentioned in the history until the reign of Hezekiah; but in the Book of Isaiah it appears that he prophesied in the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah. As Uzziah's reign of fifty years ended in B.C. 757, more than forty-five years before this, Isaiah's ministry must have lasted already fifty years or more; and he was therefore an old man at this time. In the reigns of Uzziah and Jotham, which were comparatively peaceful and prosperous, the prophet denounces the sins of the people, and shows how they will surely undermine this superficial prosperity. In the reign of Ahaz, when Israel and Syria were combining with other small states against the growing and threatening power of Assyria, Judah did not enter into the alliance; and the confederates attacked him. In this juncture, Ahaz sought an alliance with Assyria. And the burden of Isaiah's prophecy in this reign is against this alliance with Assyria; showing that Syria and Israel are not to be feared, and that the real danger of Judah is from Assyria, whose alliance the king is courting. At the same time, he warns another party in the State, which wished to join the Syrian confederacy, against that also. He counsels both parties that their only reliance is in Jehovah, and predicts the overthrow of both Syria and Assyria. And since still another party was inclined to look to Egypt for help, he shows that even that power is a broken reed, helpless against Assyria. Isaiah's career had been, therefore, in critical times; and his office had

2 Then he turned his face to the wall, and prayed unto the LORD, saying,

3 I beseech thee, O LORD, remember now how I have walked before thee in truth and with a perfect heart, and have done *that which* is good in thy sight. And Hezekiah wept ¹ sore.

4 And it came to pass, afore Isaiah was gone out into the middle ² court; that the word of the LORD came to him, saying,

5 Turn again, and tell Hezekiah the captain of my people, Thus saith the LORD, the God of David thy father, I have heard thy prayer, I have seen thy tears: behold, I will heal thee: on the third day thou shalt go up unto the house of the LORD.

6 And I will add unto thy days fifteen years; and I will deliver thee and this city out of the hand of the king of Assyria; and I will defend this city for mine own sake, and for my servant David's sake.

7 And Isaiah said, Take a lump of figs. And they took and laid it on the boil, and he recovered.

8 ¶ And Hezekiah said unto Isaiah, What *shall be* the sign that the LORD will heal me, and that I shall go up into the house of the LORD the third day?

9 And Isaiah said, This sign shalt thou have of the LORD, that the LORD will do the thing that he hath spoken: shall the shadow go forward ten degrees, or go back ten degrees?

¹ Heb. *with a great weeping*. ² Or, *city*.

been to introduce the divine view of things to guide Judah in a menacing condition of things. *Set thine house in order*: Give commandment to thy house, literally. The idea is, that he is to give his final instructions to his household. The prediction that he should die is positive in form, but it seems to have been conditional in reality,—a contingency that may belong, in fact, to all prophecies involving the element of moral agency.

3. *Remember now how I have walked before thee . . . with a perfect heart* (see 18: 3-6): The king showed in this prayer the trust in Jehovah that is said to have characterized him,—a trust that, in ordering the lives of his servants, God will not forget their loyalty to himself. This is the contingency that reversed the king's fate. Except for his past obedience, and his present trust built upon it, he would have died. *Into the middle court*: The traditional text here reads, *Into the midst of the city*. Our version is from an amended reading. If the latter is retained, it means the court, or open space, enclosed by the walls of the palace. All large buildings in the East are constructed so that the four sides enclose a court.

5. *The captain of my people*: The prince of my people. General leadership, not military simply, is meant.

6. *I will deliver thee and this city out of the hand of the king of Assyria*: As we have seen, the king of Assyria at this time was Sargon, who reigned between Shalmaneser and Sennacherib. There is no record of any invasion of Judah during his reign, but he did make war upon the Philistines on the south-west; and Samaria on the north was already in the hands of the Assyrians: so that Judah was menaced on all hands. *For mine own sake*: In a certain sense, God's honor was involved in the prosperity of his people, but only so far as they continued his people, that is, a people serving him. There came a time when his honor demanded their destruction, else he would have seemed like the gods of the heathen,—the partisan of a people, and not the defender of righteousness.

7. *A lump of figs*: A poultice of figs is used still in the East to allay the inflammation of a boil. As it was fatal but for the divine intervention, it must have been something more malignant than an ordinary boil; and the application of figs would not have cured it, except by a miracle.

9. *Shall the shadow go forward ten degrees, or go back ten degrees*: Lengthen ten degrees, or go back. This is the language by which the going backwards or

10 And Hezekiah answered, It is a light thing for the shadow to go down ten degrees: nay, but let the shadow return backward ten degrees.

11 And Isaiah the prophet cried unto the **LORD**: and he brought the shadow ten degrees backward, by which it had gone down in the ¹ dial of Ahaz.

12 ¶ At that time ² Berodach-baladan, the son of Baladan, king of Babylon, sent letters and a present unto Hezekiah: for he had heard that Hezekiah had been sick.

13 And Hezekiah hearkened unto them, and shewed them all the house of his ³ precious things, the silver, and the gold, and the spices, and the

precious ointment, and *all* the house of his ⁴ armour, and all that was found in his treasures: there was nothing in his house, nor in all his dominion, that Hezekiah shewed them not.

14 ¶ Then came Isaiah the prophet unto king Hezekiah, and said unto him, What said these men? and from whence came they unto thee? And Hezekiah said, They are come from a far country, *even* from Babylon.

15 And he said, What have they seen in thine house? And Hezekiah answered, All the things that *are* in mine house have they seen: there is nothing among my treasures that I have not shewed them.

¹ Heb. *degrees*. ² Or, *Merodach-baladan*. ³ Or, *spicery*. ⁴ Or, *jewels*. Heb. *vessels*.

forwards of time, as measured on a sun-dial, would be expressed. As this allows the earth to mark its own time in its revolution on its axis, the real change indicated here would involve a most extraordinary disturbance, and one utterly disproportional to the effect intended. We must suppose that we have here an appearance produced by some other means than a real retarding of time.

10. *It is a light thing for the shadow to go down ten degrees:* This involves only a quickening of the pace in the direction in which it is already moving: the other means an actual turning back.

12. *Berodach-baladan, the son of Baladan, king of Babylon:* The true name is Merodach-Baladan. He was king of Babylon twice,—once from B. C. 721-709, and once for six months in 703. Babylon was in the condition of a subject people at this time, trying to assert its independence of Assyria. Sargon defeated this attempt in the twelfth year of Merodach-baladan, and drove him from the throne; but in 703, on the death of Sargon, Merodach-baladan regained the throne, only to lose it again after six months. The Assyrian inscriptions make him the son of Tagin; so that either the one or the other, supposing it to be a true name, must belong to some remoter ancestor. The name is formed from that of the Babylonian god, Merodach=Bel, which occurs in other personal names. *For he had heard that Hezekiah had been sick:* In Isa. 39:1, it adds, *and had recovered*; and in 2 Chron. 32:31, it speaks of ambassadors being sent “to inquire of the wonder done in the land,” which may refer to the cure or the sign. But every thing about the narrative, especially the dark light in which Hezekiah’s treatment of the embassy is placed, indicates the correctness of the statement of Josephus, that they came to negotiate a treaty with Judah against Assyria.

13. *All the house of his precious things:* The things in this treasure-house follow immediately; viz., gold, silver, spices, and precious ointments. The house itself takes its name from the spices,—the spice house. *All the house of his armor:* His armory or arsenal. The wealth and resources of Hezekiah are said to have been great (see 2 Chron. 32:27-29). The object of this display was to show the king of Babylon what he might expect from Hezekiah in case of an alliance,—what help he could afford an ally.

14. *Then came Isaiah the prophet:* As we have seen, it was his idea to keep Judah from all these entangling alliances with foreign and idolatrous nations; and so he looked with suspicion on all these embassies of foreigners. *They are come from a*

16 And Isaiah said unto Hezekiah, Hear the word of the LORD.

17 Behold, the days come, that all that is in thine house, and that

which thy fathers have laid up in store unto this day, shall be carried into Babylon: nothing shall be left, saith the LORD.

far country, even from Babylon: He speaks of it as an unfamiliar place; and so it was, comparatively at any rate. It was a secondary power, belonging to Assyria, and had not come into contact with Judah before this.

17 *Behold, the days come:* This prophecy is remarkable; anticipating, as it does, the overthrow of Assyria, the elevation of Babylon to independence and power, and so the subjugation of Judah, not by any present enemy, but by a nation that was itself at this time a feudatory power.

LESSON X.

THE SINFUL NATION.—Isa. 1:1-18.

A GENERAL VIEW.—Our study of prophecy in connection with the history of Israel and Judah begins with Isaiah, whose ministry was confined to the southern kingdom; but before him, at any rate before the period of his great activity, there had been two prophets whose work had been to warn the greater northern kingdom of the impending judgment of Jehovah against the sins of the nation. Amos prophesied in the reign of Jeroboam, a long-lived and outwardly prosperous prince; but he saw the injustice and oppression and greed that accompanied the outward worship of Jehovah, and prophesied the downfall of the nation at a period of about fifty-five years preceding the Assyrian conquest; and Hosea began his work at the same time, but continued it during all that critical period up to about the time of the captivity. And contemporary with Isaiah, at least in the middle and last part of his work, was Micah, whose prophetic mission was to both Judah and Israel. We have given already, in the preceding lesson, an outline of Isaiah's work. He lived in the time when Assyria was brushing aside the small nations that lay in its path, with the evident intention of possessing itself of the Mediterranean coast and of all the intervening country. He had his eye also on Egypt in the south. Judah and Israel lay in the path to both these prizes; and the important and absorbing question of the right policy for the nation to pursue in such a juncture was devolved upon Isaiah to answer, not in the name of a worldly policy, but in the name of Jehovah. His answer was twofold,—first, that the Jews should not make any alliance with other smaller nations against Assyria, nor with Assyria against their more immediate enemies; and, second, that they should give themselves to the work of internal and individual reform, by which they should secure the aid of Jehovah against all their enemies. This first chapter belongs to the second part of this prophetic message.

1 The vision of Isaiah the son of Amoz, which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah.

2 Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth: for the LORD hath spoken, I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me.

NOTES.—2. *Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth:* He calls on them to hear, because it is Jehovah that speaks; and, moreover, he calls them to witness against Israel, as in Deut. 4: 26; 30: 19. *For the Lord hath spoken:* For Jehovah speaketh; viz., the words that follow. *I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me:* This is the burden of God's complaint against his people; that he has treated them as a father his children,—feeding, training, loving them; and they have rebelled, not against authority, but against love.

3 The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib: *but* Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider.

4 Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evildoers, children that are corrupters; they have forsaken the LORD, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger, they are ² gone away backward.

5 ¶ Why should ye be stricken any more? ye will ³ revolt more and more: the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint.

¹ Heb. of heaviness. ² Heb. alienated, or, separated. Ps. 58:3. ³ Heb. increase revolt. ⁴ Or, oil. ⁵ Heb. as the overthrow of strangers.

3. *The ox knoweth his owner:* The people of God are worse than the domestic animals. They do know who owns and feeds them; but Israel is owned and fed by Jehovah, and yet serves strange gods.

4. *Ah sinful nation:* Alas, sinful nation! *A seed of evildoers, children that are corrupters:* Children acting corruptly. These two phrases are contrasted with what the children of God ought to be,—a holy seed. Indeed, the whole statement has this implied contrast, since the nation and people were set apart by their relation to God as a consecrated people. *They have provoked the Holy One of Israel to anger:* They have despised the Holy One of Israel. In this attribute of Jehovah appears the nature of Israel's sin against him. As appears in what follows, that offence does not consist in the worship of other gods, nor in any formal irregularity in their worship of Jehovah, — though this is what we might gather from reading the historical books only, — but in failing to worship and serve Jehovah as a holy being.

5. *Why should ye be stricken any more? ye will revolt more and more:* Why will ye . . . ? ye multiply rebellion. The second clause assigns the reason for the first. It is their repeated defection that occasions their continual smiting; and what is the use of it? *The whole head, . . . and the whole heart:* Every head, . . . and every heart. This shows how the whole nation, every one among its people, is afflicted with God's chastisements. The completeness of the evil is described in what follows.

6. *Wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores:* Cuts and stripes and fresh wounds. The first denotes the wounds made by a sword or knife, the second those made with a rod, and the third wounds still fresh and smarting. *They have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment:* They have not been pressed nor bound up. The different processes of dressing wounds — the pressing, to get out the blood and matter, the binding, and the anointing — are described. There are these wounds, and nothing has been done towards curing or alleviating them. In verses 5, 6, the prophet remonstrates with the people on the ground of the evil that their sin brings on them, as he has in the preceding verses on the ground of its heinousness as committed against a gracious God and a holy vocation.

7. *Your country is desolate:* Here he proceeds from the figurative description of the state of the nation to a literal statement of the same. *As overthrown by strangers:* As the overthrow of strangers; that is, God's destruction of his own people and land is such as he might be expected to inflict on strangers.

8. *The daughter of Zion:* Jerusalem. In Hebrew, the expression would denote ordinarily the inhabitants of the place; but, by an extension of the figure employed, it is applied to the place itself. *A cottage in a vineyard:* A hut in a vineyard, — the temporary shelter erected for the watchman set there to guard the vineyard against jackals,

6 From the sole of the foot even unto the head *there is* no soundness in it; *but* wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores: they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ⁴ointment.

7 Your country *is* desolate, your cities *are* burned with fire: your land, strangers devour it in your presence, and *it is* desolate, ⁵as overthrown by strangers.

8 And the daughter of Zion is left as a cottage in a vineyard, as a lodge in a garden of cucumbers, as a besieged city.

9 Except the **LORD** of hosts had left unto us a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom, *and* we should have been like unto Gomorrah.

10 ¶ Hear the word of the **LORD**, ye rulers of Sodom; give ear unto the law of our God, ye people of Gomorrah.

11 To what purpose *is* the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith the **LORD**: I am full of the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat

of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of ¹ he goats.

12 When ye come ² to appear before me, who hath required this at your hand, to tread my courts?

13 Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto me; the new moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with; *it is* ³ iniquity, even the solemn meeting.

¹ Heb. *great he goats*. ² Heb. *to be seen*. ³ Or, *grief*.

foxes, and other animals that destroyed the fruit; and the lodge in a garden (field) of cucumbers is a structure of the same kind, and for the same purpose. The figure denotes the deserted condition of Jerusalem, left alone in a desolate land full of burned cities and wasted fields. It is as solitary as the watchman's hut in a vineyard, with not another human habitation in sight. *Like a besieged city*: The comparison is not so obvious here. In the first place, the meaning *besieged* is not common; and then, while a besieged city is cut off from the outside world, it does not compare, closely at any rate, with a city in the midst of a desolate land. It seems better to translate, *like a tower of watch*. The situation of these towers in the midst of frontier and exposed places carries out the preceding figure.

9. *Except the Lord of hosts had left unto us a very small remnant*: A few survivors of the general destruction. Jehovah of hosts, the God of battles, is the characteristic title of the God who has so spared them from utter destruction. A very important question here is, to what period in Isaiah's ministry this passage (verses 7-9) applies. It is a graphic description of a wasted and ruined land. But the reigns of the first two kings contemporary with him, Uzziah and Jotham, were prosperous reigns, in both of which Judah was not only secure from invasions, but strong and prosperous internally, and successful in war. In the reign of Ahaz succeeding these, however, the land was invaded and despoiled by both Syria and Israel; great numbers of the people being slain or captured (see 2 Chron. 28: 5-8). And under Hezekiah, though the Assyrians were finally driven off through divine intervention, it was not till they had brought the land into great extremities. This first chapter, therefore, cannot be first in chronological order. We may suppose that it is placed first, as being more general in its character, so that it serves as an introduction to the other prophecies. Of the two periods named above, the reign of Ahaz seems the more probable, as that was a time corresponding to this in wickedness as well as ruin.

10. *Ye rulers of Sodom; . . . ye people of Gomorrah*: The prophet passes over here from the comparison with Sodom and Gomorrah in outward condition, to a designation of Jerusalem as being Sodom and Gomorrah, in one, for wickedness; and here, too, he begins another paragraph with the same verbs — “hear” and “give ear” — with which he began the chapter.

11. *To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me?* Of what use to me is the multitude, etc.? The sacrifices here are the slain, but only partly burned offerings; the burnt offerings are those wholly burned; the fat refers to the custom of offering the fat and inwards of the peace offerings.

12. *When ye come to appear before me*: At the three great feasts; and then the expression comes to be used of all the resort of the people to the temple. *Who hath required this at your hand, to tread my courts?* The attempt of the prophet to reduce these acts to their bare and inexpressive outwardness is better expressed here by the word *trample*.

13. *Bring no more vain oblations*: Lying oblations. The particular offering

14 Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth: they are a trouble unto me; I am weary to bear *them*.

15 And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you: yea, when ye ¹make many prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of ²blood.

16 ¶ Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings

from before mine eyes; cease to do evil;

17 Learn to do well; seek judgment, ³relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow.

18 Come now, and let us reason together, saith the **LORD**: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.

¹ Heb. *multiply prayer*. ² Heb. *bloods*. ³ Or, *righten*.

meant is the bloodless offering called the meat-offering. He calls them lying, because the people offer them without having in their hearts the sentiments toward God that they are intended to express. *The new moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with; it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting*: The new moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies — I cannot endure iniquity and the solemn meeting. The first three nouns are left ungoverned, and he sums up what he has to say about them in the last striking sentence. The sight of assemblies called together to worship him, but having evil in their hearts, God cannot endure. Men thought that the religious service offset the evil, and atoned for it; but to God they made an incongruous and odious mixture.

14. *Your new moons and your appointed feasts*: And your festivals. *They are a trouble to me*: A burden. *I am weary to bear them*: Of bearing them, God sees the utter formality and heartlessness of these things; or, rather, he sees how in the life of the people religion and righteousness are dissociated, and he is weary of what would otherwise delight him.

16. *When ye spread forth your hands*: In prayer. *When ye make many prayers*: This is parallel to the preceding, as if he had said, When you pray, I will hide mine eyes; and even when you multiply prayers, I will not hear. *Your hands are full of blood*: And so it is useless to spread them forth in prayer. Bloodshed and violence do not harmonize with prayer; and, if the two come together, it is the blood that nullifies the praying, and not the prayer that removes the stain of blood. Notice that throughout this section (verses 10-15) the prophet disclaims making any charge against the nation, such as the annalist makes in 2 Kings 16: 3, 4. It was not that they worshipped other gods, or worshipped Jehovah in irregular places or ways, but that they were insincere and heartless in their worship, joining sacrifices, feasts, and prayers with injustice and oppression. It is this insistence on real righteousness, that marks the true prophet.

16. *Wash you, make you clean*: Figurative expressions denoting moral cleansing.

17. *Learn to do well*: Or, to do good, in the sense of *benefit*. *Seek judgment*: Seek justice, rather, in judgment. *Relieve the oppressed*: Straighten out the oppressor. Make him do right. *Judge the fatherless*: Do justice to the fatherless. *Plead for the widow*: Plead her case in court. In this statement of the reform needed, it is injustice and oppression of the weak that the prophet emphasizes as the things needing to be remedied. As the charge against the nation has been moral evil, so the remedy is not sacrifice, but repentance and a new life.

18. *Come now, and let us reason together*: That is, after this repentance and turning from their evil ways. Will God after this condemn and punish their sins? The answer is, No: the sins that are as scarlet, flaming and deep-dyed, shall be as wool or snow.

LESSON XI.

THE SUFFERING SAVIOUR.—Isa. 53:1-12.

A GENERAL VIEW.—With chapter 40 begins a new and singular part of the prophecy. In the preceding chapters the prophet has been dealing with his own times, showing the true course for the nation to take in the crisis caused by Assyria's increasing power and encroachments, and closing with the story of Assyria's final repulse. In the second part we are transported abruptly to Babylon, and hear the prophet's word to the captive nation. Moreover, in these chapters, a new personage emerges, called the servant of Jehovah. What the title means appears in 41: 8, where Israel, the seed of Abraham, is said to be the servant of Jehovah. And in chapter 42, the train of thought connects together immediately the servant of Jehovah in verses 1 and 19, and Jacob and Israel in verse 24. In chapter 44, it is again Jacob my servant in verse 1, and Israel my servant in verse 21. In chapter 45: 4; 48: 20, the same title appears, with the same application. In chapter 49: 3, a change occurs; for, while it is still Israel that is addressed as the servant of Jehovah (verse 3), he appears as the one who is to bring back Jacob, or Israel, to Jehovah, and to be his salvation unto the ends of the earth, although the servant of Jehovah is himself the abhorred of the nation (verses 5-9). And in 50: 4-10, the servant of the Lord appears again as giving his back to smiters, and his cheek to pluckers, while he declares the word of the Lord. With chapter 52: 13 begins the paragraph from which our lesson is taken, the subject of which is still the servant of Jehovah. And here the description culminates. For he is described as despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows, whom men count smitten of the Lord, but who is really bearing the sins of the people and not his own sins, and by whose stripes the peace of the people is purchased. In order to keep us within the range of his subject, however, all this is set by the prophet within the limits of the captivity and the restoration. And it appears, therefore, that the Israel of whom all this is said — who is to restore Israel, and by his own sufferings redeem God's people — is the elect Israel, the holy seed in the midst of the people. And yet, as throughout the Old Testament, the prophecy outruns the limits of the immediate fulfilment. There is an unfulfilled remainder that points forward to the Christ. He is the true servant of Jehovah, of whom all the national and individual types were only meagre copies.

1 Who hath believed our ¹report?
and to whom is the arm of the LORD
revealed?

2 For he shall grow up before

him as a tender plant, and as a root
out of a dry ground: he hath no
form nor comeliness; and when we
shall see him, *there is* no beauty that
we should desire him.

¹ Or, *doctrine*. Heb. *hearing*.

NOTES.—1. *Who hath believed our report?* That is, as both the preceding and following verses show, the report of the prophet and those associated with him, in regard to the servant of Jehovah. *And to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?* In the exaltation of his servant.

2. *For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground:* For he grew up as a shoot, and as a sprout; as a small and unpromising thing, like a mere sprout out of desert land. **Form nor comeliness:** Beauty nor pomp; the latter referring to the state and splendor in which princes array themselves. **And when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him:** Literally, And we see him, and there is no sight (or appearance) that we should delight in him. This gives the reason why the report of his exaltation is not received.

3 He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and ¹we hid as it were *our* faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

4 ¶ Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.

5 But he *was* ²wounded for our transgressions, *he was* bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of

our peace *was* upon him; and with his ³stripes we are healed.

6 All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD ⁴hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.

7 He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.

8 ⁵He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall de-

¹ Or, *he hid as it were his face from us*. Heb. *as a hiding of faces from him, or, from us*. ² Or, *tormented*. ³ Heb. *bruise*. ⁴ Heb. *hath made the iniquity of us all to meet on him*. ⁵ Or, *He was taken away by distress and judgment: but, etc.*

3. *He is despised and rejected of men*: The Hebrew is more striking, making this a participial clause, without any verb, Despised and forsaken of men. *And we hid as it were our faces from him*: And like one hiding the face from us. It is a part of the description of the despised and sorrowful servant of Jehovah. He is like one who in grief and humility hides his face from men.

4. *Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows*: Probably the first word is adversative, — But he bore our griefs. The cause of a righteous man's grief and low estate is that he bears the pains of other men. What makes this prophecy so wonderful is not simply that it foresees the Redeemer's sufferings, but that it sees the law of human life that underlies them. The innocent suffer with, and for, the guilty. A sinful nation or race is redeemed by the sorrows and oppressions and blood of its righteous remnant. This law, which was completely exemplified only in the sufferings of the Redeemer of men, the prophet saw being worked out in the history of his country. *We did esteem him stricken, smitten of God*: With the blindness that saw in all suffering only the punishment of personal guilt, they attributed his sorrows to the just visitation of God.

5. *He was wounded for our transgressions*: The servant of Jehovah, though himself righteous, — rather, because himself righteous, — is afflicted and despised; but it is an affliction that grows out of the sins of others. *The chastisement of our peace*: kind. The argument progresses here. For it is not only true that the righteous man Of our welfare. The Hebrew word means specifically health, and generally good of any suffers with and for the guilty, but that through his suffering the guilty are saved. Righteousness, simply as righteousness, does not suffer. It is only an aggressive and redemptive righteousness that is persecuted and despised. A righteousness that opposes and rebukes sin is itself opposed and hated; but this is just the unselfish holiness by which sin is eradicated, and men are saved.

6. *All we like sheep have gone astray*: Like the flock, literally. The prophet is here depicting in a figure the general and well-nigh universal sinfulness of the nation; and in the last clause he drops the figure of straying, and speaks literally of the iniquity (perverseness) of them all, which Jehovah lays upon his servant. In what sense he does this is seen in verses 2 and 3, of which all the rest is only an explanation. He makes him bear the scorn and grief that belong to their sins.

7. *He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth*: He was oppressed, and he submitted, and opened not his mouth. The silent submission to oppression begins with the second clause. The argument advances here another step; showing not only the suffering of God's servant, but the meekness with which he yields to it.

8. *He was taken from prison and from judgment*: He was taken by op-

clare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people ¹ was he stricken.

9 And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his ² death; because he had done no violence, neither *was any* deceit in his mouth.

10 ¶ Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put *him* to grief:

³ when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see *his* seed, he shall prolong *his* days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand.

11 He shall see of the travail of his soul, *and* shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities.

¹ Heb. *was the stroke upon him.* ² Heb. *deaths.* ³ Or, *when his soul shall make an offering.*

pression and by judgment, or by an oppressive judgment. *And who shall declare his generation?* This is one of the immense difficulties of this section of the prophecy. In fact, there is no satisfactory explanation of it. *Who considereth his generation?* is the probable translation of it. *For he was cut off out of the land of the living:* The prophet has brought the servant of Jehovah at last to death, death inflicted by an oppressive judgment; and this, together with his other sufferings, he lays at the door of the people's transgression. It is because of their transgression that he comes to a violent death. Not simply that a wicked people put him to death, but that their sin and redemption cost him his life.

9. *And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death:* And with the rich his burial-mound. This is another of the difficulties of the passage. Probably, however, the *rich* are here parallel with the *wicked*; and so the prophet thinks of the ungodliness and pride that in his day belonged to the rich, and uses the word here as a synonyme for *ungodly*. *Because he had done no violence:* Although he had done no violence. In spite of the absence of wickedness and deceit in him, they buried him with the wicked.

10. *Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief:* Another difficult passage, where it seems almost impossible to translate it as it stands. With a slight change, not of the original letters, but of the vowel points introduced long afterwards, it would read, And his bruising pleased the Lord, the pain, since his soul makes a trespass offering. It means that the affliction, the crushing, endured by the servant of Jehovah pleased God, for the reason that in it his soul made a trespass offering. Not the pain itself pleased Jehovah, but the sacrificial element in it,—the sight of a man, or class of men, giving themselves for others, taking on themselves the burdens and pains occasioned by other men's sins, and necessary for their redemption. *He shall see his seed:* A seed. According to the rendering given above, there should be a period after the word *offering*, so that this clause begins a new sentence; but, though it is disconnected grammatically with the preceding, it nevertheless expresses a result of the Lord's pleasure with the sacrifice of his servant. He will give him a seed, a spiritual posterity, inheriting his loyal obedience and righteousness. *The pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hands:* The cause of the Lord, that about which he concerns himself. The prophet seems to bring his subject to life again here,—a marvel easily explained by the resurrection of Jesus in the Messianic application of the prophecy. In the more immediate meaning given to the prophecy, it is explained by the fact that it is not an individual whose career is depicted here, but the holy seed or remnant of the people, which continues, although individuals die.

11. *He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied:* This would mean that he shall see the fruits of his anguish of soul, and be satisfied,—find in them a satisfying reward. It may mean that, because of the travail of his soul, he shall see and be satisfied; that is, see what will satisfy him. *By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many:* By the knowledge of him shall my righteous servant

12 Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

render many righteous. Many, knowing him, will be turned to righteousness by his righteous example. *For he shall bear their iniquities*: And he shall bear, or he bore.

12. *Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great*: Assign him a portion among the great. He has been poor, humble, downtrodden; but his God will assign him his portion among the great. *He was numbered with the transgressors*: The righteous man has been depicted here as suffering death, not at the hands of a mob, but by an unrighteous judgment that puts him to death as a malefactor. In Mark 15: 27, 28, our Lord's crucifixion between two thieves is said to fulfil this Scripture. *And he bare the sins of many*: This gives the true account of the matter. In reality, he was suffering, not for his own sins, but for the sins of others. *And made intercession for the transgressors*: His life and death plead for them.

We have seen how, in the prophet's mind, the nation was to be redeemed and brought out of captivity by the sacrifices of its righteous remnant; but, as his imagination kindles with the glowing vision, we feel how meagre and inadequate is either the return from captivity, or the righteousness that procured it, to fulfil that prophecy. After all had passed, the people felt that it had another to add to the list of its unfulfilled prophecies; and it kept its expectant eye on the future. And in its Messiah, when he came, all the prophecies met, and found their final and adequate fulfilment. He was the righteous servant of Jehovah, despised and rejected of men, bearing his people's sins and sorrows, and turning many to righteousness, who shall see of the travail of his soul, and be satisfied.

LESSON XII.

THE GRACIOUS INVITATION.—Isa. 55:1-11.

A GENERAL VIEW.—The vision that is interrupted by the description of the suffering servant of Jehovah is that of the return of God's captive people from Babylon to Jerusalem; and in chapter 54, the strain of triumph is continued. The desolate and afflicted Jerusalem is called upon to enlarge her borders, because she is not only to be inhabited again, but to spread out on the right hand and on the left. She is the bride of Jehovah; and, though forsaken for a little, his covenant with her is unchangeable. She is to be beautified without, and made glorious within, established in righteousness and peace, and no weapon formed against her is to prosper. In our chapter, the subject is continued; the thirsty people being invited to partake of the waters, yes, the wine and milk, of God's blessing. They are reminded again of God's covenant, and are shown how, in repentance, they may find God again, whose mercy and faithfulness exceed the thought of man, as the heavens overtop the world. And here, again, the immediate fulfilment falls far short of the glory of the prophet's vision, which had to wait for the advent of the Messiah before it found any adequate accomplishment.

I Ho, every one that thirsteth, eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk come ye to the waters, and he that without money and without price hath no money; come ye, buy, and

NOTES.—1. *Ho, every one that thirsteth*: The interjection is one that is generally used to express sorrow and grief; and, even in cases like this, it has an undertone of sadness, as it commiserates the condition out of which escape is promised (see Zech. 2: 6). *Come ye to the waters*: A semicolon should be placed after this instead of a

2 Wherefore do ye ¹spend money for *that which is* not bread? and your labour for *that which satisfieth not?* hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye *that which is* good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness.

3 Incline your ear, and come unto me: hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting cove-

nant with you, *even the sure mercies of David.*

4 Behold, I have given him *for a witness to the people*, a leader and commander to the people.

5 Behold, thou shalt call a nation *that thou knowest not*, and nations *that knew not thee* shall run unto thee because of the LORD thy God, and for the Holy One of Israel; for he hath glorified thee.

¹ Heb. *weigh.*

comma, and only a comma after the next clause, connecting that with the invitation to buy and eat. It is an invitation to the thirsty to come to the waters, and to him without money to buy and eat. The paradox is explained by the fact that it is God of whom they are asked to buy, who gives not for money, but for the asking, to every one that seeks him, on condition only that they turn from their evil ways. *Buy wine and milk without money, and without price:* Not worthless things, but the very emblems of plenty are to be had without money.

2. *Wherefore do ye spend money:* Literally, weigh out silver. Money was not coined, but paid by weight. *And your labour:* Your earnings. The difficulty with the people was, that they were giving money, the earnings of their toil, for unsatisfactory things, when they could have good things without money. *Hearken diligently unto me:* It becomes apparent here that it is Jehovah who speaks, inviting his people to listen to his gracious words of invitation. In these opening verses, the prophet, seeing the hungry condition of the captive people, strangers in a strange land, humbled under a foreign yoke, invites them to partake of God's free gifts. He sees all the blessings of restoration and freedom open to them, if only they will hear the voice of God's grace, and return to him; and to describe these blessings, he employs the language of physical plenty.

3. *Incline your ear:* Bend down the ear, in order to listen. *Your soul shall live:* Life is the great blessing attached to righteousness in the Old Testament as well as the New, though it increases continually in the spirituality of its meaning. It never means in this connection to exist simply, but to thrive or prosper. *I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David:* This covenant is the one to which they referred with most delight and confidence, because it contained the clause that, even if his descendants committed iniquity, God would chastise them, but would not withdraw his mercy from them as he had from Saul, but would establish the throne of his kingdom forever. This made the mercy bestowed on David, and on the nation through him, sure, not fluctuating with the uncertain conduct of men. Not even this covenant, however, was fulfilled in the literal sense of it, but awaited its spiritual fulfilment in the Christ.

4. *Behold, I have given him for a witness to the people:* More probably, a lawgiver to the peoples. The word *commander* in the following clause does not mean a military commander, but, in a general sense, one who issues commands, a ruler. This carries forward the thought of the preceding verse, showing what the covenanted mercy to David is. God made him a ruler, and established the throne in his line: and, moreover, he made him king not only over his own people, but over peoples; other nations were yet to acknowledge the dominion of David's royal line.

5. *Behold, thou shalt call a nation that thou knowest not:* Probably, Jehovah is here addressing his people, showing them what they will do by virtue of this promise to David that he shall be a leader of peoples. *Call:* Summon or invite to come with them. *And nations that knew not thee:* A nation. *Shall run unto thee:* In obedience to this call. *And for the Holy One of Israel:* Unto the Holy

6 ¶ Seek ye the **LORD** while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near:

7 Let the wicked forsake his way, and ¹the unrighteous man his thoughts. and let him return unto the **LORD**, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for ²he will abundantly pardon.

8 ¶ For my thoughts *are* not your thoughts, neither *are* your ways my ways, saith the **LORD**.

9 For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways

higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.

10 For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater:

11 So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper *in the thing* whereto I sent it.

¹ Heb. *the man of iniquity.* ² Heb. *he will multiply to pardon.*

One. In the same construction as *unto thee* after the verb *run*. They shall run to join Israel, and Israel's God, because he honors and beautifies his people. Instead of being a captive and oppressed people, they shall be a nation to whom other peoples shall be glad to join themselves, and whose king shall rule over other nations, because of the favor shown them by Jehovah.

6. *Seek ye the Lord while he may be found:* In this call extended to the people, and in the promise contained in it to renew the covenant with them, God has shown himself to be near and gracious; and now, therefore, is the time to call on him.

7. *Let the wicked forsake his way:* This is the way back to God. For he is holy; and to call on him with the lips, while the heart remains unholy, and the hands defiled, is a mockery. *And the unrighteous man his thoughts:* His devices, or evil purposes. The nation is one to which great promises of good have been made; but it is not now in a condition to receive them, because of its sins. It needs to forsake them, and then it will find a pardoning God.

8. *For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways:* The words *ways* and *thoughts* here take up the *way* and *thoughts* of the preceding verse, and show why the wicked man is exhorted to forsake his way and thoughts. They are not like God's. God's ways are immeasurably higher than man's.

10. *For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven:* This beautiful comparison contains two points: first, that the snow and rain do not simply come down to the earth, and then return, without accomplishing any thing; and, second, that what they do accomplish is a gracious purpose.

11. *So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth:* A sure and gracious word. *It shall not return unto me void:* Empty,—a figurative expression of the idea of non-fulfilment of its purpose. The word of God is here conceived as endowed with power to fulfil itself. This is the difference between God's way and man's, that should induce man to forsake his way and return to God. Man's way is purposeless and fluctuating; his adherence to right and truth is unsteady: but God is eternally and absolutely fixed in his purposes of grace.

The lesson ends abruptly here, just as the vision is approaching its climax. The next verses show us what the gracious word of God, so sure of fulfilment, is. It is the restoration of God's captive people, and their return to their own land. They are to go out with joy, and be led forth with peace.

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